WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 7, NO. 5 | THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION | SEPTEMBER 1996

"As long as people live in a complete darkness of ignorance, they have no understanding of the oppression and wrong inflicted upon them by those in power" M.A. Sommer

Welfare Reform

Clinton's Callousness

Jerome Johnson

When I voted for Bill Clinton in 1992, I thought I was voting with my eyes open. I wasn't expecting significant, progressive changes. I was grateful for the lip service about civil rights, a higher minimum wage, women's right to choose. I was very afraid of his promises to "mend" affirmative action, increase police and prisons, to "end welfare as we know it." I thought that if we held Clinton politely accountable, things wouldn't be too bad. I hoped that Clinton's ambition would be muted by the great power and responsibility of the Presidency. Like millions of other Americans, I gritted my teeth, prayed, and punched my ballot.

I will not vote for Bill Clinton again.

I won't bote for him again because throughout his presidency, Clinton has sacrificed the public good on the altar of his relentless campaign to win re-election. Because Clinton is a politician, I expected a degree of pandering and compromise. Yet in the end, I figured Clinton would take his own advice and remember "those that brung him."

He hasn't.

In what Newsweek's Joe Klein calls "monumental callousness," Clinton has signed so-called welfare reform into law. By doing so he's kept his campaign promise to "end welfare as we know it." This promise got Clinton a lot of votes because of the myth that most people on welfare are lazy, promiscuous minorities who can work, but don;t, and in fact live better than the rest of us who pay an inordinate amount of tax money to support them. In fact, most welfare recipients are white women, who get off welfare on their own, after about eighteen months. And those eighteen months are no picnic. One of the reasons it's no picnic is because welfare is just $.01 of the Government dollar.

The new rules are harsh, and no mistake. Families are cut off after two years, and if the parent(s) don't have work, too bad. There is a lifetime limit of five years. Because the states will now control funds via block grants, the states will decide who is eligible, for how much, of the resources the states decide to allocate for welfare. In the past, the federal stipend supplemented state aid, based on nationwide cost-of-living criteria. From my own experience I can attest that too many time, the federal stipend -- combined with states' stipend and medical coupons, and used with care -- made survival possible. Now, the federal safety net is gone.

I won't bote for him again because throughout his presidency, Clinton has sacrificed the public good on the altar of his relentless campaign to win re-election.

Clinton said that in some cases, employers would receive money to train/employ people. What if it isn't enough to cover transportation medical, and child care costs? Every parent I've known who spent time on welfare says that, although important, the money wasn't the most critical issue. Time and again they say, "If I got a job, how will I afford health care for my children, even under Lowry's new plan?"

Clinton spoke about jobs, too, but it's hard to support a family on the minimum wage -- even if you overcome the usual hiring hurdles. In an economy where major corporations fire tens of thousands ("downsizing") and small businesses are operated by overworked family members because they can't afford to hire employees, where are the jobs? How much -- if any -- job training and counseling will the state provide? What happens to people who need job training while on welfare but can't get it in two years, unable to work but are cut off from welfare anyway? What happens to their children? Insufficient funding, lack of training, long waiting lists ain't

(Continued on page 11)

Court Protection Against Schoolyard Anti-Gay Assaults

WIP Newservice

In a landmark case that could improve the lives of lesbians and gay men in the nation's schools, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of a young gay man who sued his former Wisconsin school for failing to protect him from constant, at times brutal, anti-gay assaults and harassment while he was a student.

The appeal, Nabozny v. Podlesny, was brought by Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and is the first of its kind to challenge anti-gay violence in the nation's schools. The decision reversed a lower court's ruling throwing the case out and remanded it to the federal district court in Madison, Wisconsin for trial.

The court ruled that Nabozny could pursue his gender and sexual orientation discrimination claims under the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution. Nabozny now can take his case to trial to establish the school's liability.

Patricia M. Logue, managing attorney for Lambda's Midwest Regional Office, who argued the appeal, said,

> This ruling in favor of Jamie Nabozny is spectacular news for young lesbians and gay men facing violence and harassment in their schools. It means the federal constitution requires spectacular news for young lesbians and gay men facing violence and harassment in their schools. It means the federal constitution requires schools to offer gay students the same protections and safety given other students. This may seem obvious, but school officials regularly deny young lesbians and gay men refuge from violence.

"This decision sends a message to every school district in the country not to sweep problems of anti-gay violence under the rug," – Dohrn.

Logue also said the ruling directly affects courts in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin and will be influential nationwide.

"This decision sends a message to every school district in the country not to sweep problems of anti-gay violence under the rug," said Lambda Legal Director Beatrice Dohrn. "This is a pervasive problem that all schools must face. Young lesbians and gay men have the right to a safe education," Dohrn Director Beatrice Dohrn. A jubilant Nabozny said:

> I hope the thousands of other gay teens forced to live through this kind of terror will be encouraged by my victory and will not give up. I feel like someone has finally recognized that it was the violence that was the problem, not me or my sexual orientation, and I am deeply grateful.

During his four-year ordeal in Ashland, Wisconsin, middle and high schools, Nabozny and his parents repeatedly asked the schools to safeguard him from his attackers, but school officials told them that Nabozny had to learn to expect such abuse because he is gay. During an assault that resulted in injuries requiring surgery, 10 students surrounded Nabozny while another student wearing boots repeatedly kicked him in the stomach. Another time, students urinated on him, and in another instance, students pushed him to the floor and acted out a mock rape. Nabozny attempted suicide several times and ran away to escape the abuse.

A friend-of-the-court brief was filed in support of Nabozny's appeal by the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of Social Workers, the national organization of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, and the Chicago lesbian and gay social services agency Horizons.

Lambda is the nation's oldest and largest legal organization dedicated to the civil rights of lesbians, gay men and people with HIV/AIDS. ◆

CONSUMER GENERAL STRIKE!

5th Annual Buy Nothing Day
Tuesday, September 24, 1996

NADER IN THE DEBATE

Call the Presidental Debate Commission to say you want Ralph Nader in the debate. A reason is that he is on the ballot in 30 states, which is enough to possibly win the presidency. – 1-202-872-1020

LETTERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Revolutionary Thinking

To the writers and readers of WORKS IN PROGRESS,

Thank you for thinking in rolutionary ways. Thank you for your level of consciousness, compassion and your concern for humanity and this planet. Revolutionary Thinking is thinking that solves even the toughest existing problems, problems that interfere with human well being. Revolutionary thinking is thinking that looks clearly at the past, the present, and builds a vision for the future to develop, support, encourage, and enhance all relationships, goods, services, institutions, systems, programs, and places that contribute to the well being of humans and life on this planet. In other words a wholistic view of well being for life on this planet.

Revolutionary Thinking involves applying the following thoughts:

1) You are the only one that knows or can know enough to enable you to thrive. Thriving is not related to the endless acquisition of material goods. Thriving is about personal well being, developing one's potential, and serving humanity and life on this planet. You are the only one that can bring your particular talent, experience, and expression into being.

2) You know to begin exactly where you are.

3) You know what you want. If you do not yet know the specifics of what you want, you begin where you are and look at what you know you do not want and work from there.

4) You decide how you are going to get what you want using honesty, integrity, intuition, critical thinking, and an open heart and mind.

5) You monitor to see if what you are doing is working. You adapt accordingly to reach your goal. You remain flexible, resilient, and work from a position of integrity and justice.

6) You know the difference between goals and priorities and you prioritize your time and life energy to align with the accomplishment of your goals.

7) You recognize your right to your experience and self expression, and to the equal right of others.

8) You realize that nothing is done without risk and the possibility of making mistakes. You are willing to not only risk but to correct mistakes in a just manner when they occur.

9) You have the right to change your mind and your direction if you choose to do so in order to maintain your own well being.

10) You serve an idea, purpose, and vision that is larger than yourself, a vision that serves humanity and life on this planet.

Again I thank all of you for your work, Letitia Flynt, Personal Resource Consultant, WOMEN'S VISION.

Nude Recreation

Dear Editor:

Thank you for printing my article, "A New Way to Feel About Your Body," in your July 1996 issue. Knowing that some of your readers will want to try nude recreation, I'd like to give some local references. Our beautiful Northwest offers many relaxing, affordable, clothes-free opportunities.

Clothing-optional beach areas can be found at Rooster Rock and Sauvie Island in Oregon, Wreck Beach in Vancouver, BC, and at our own Evergreen College. The group I belong to, Forest Murmurs Travel Club, can be reached by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to PO Box 5113, Lacey, WA 98509-5113. Lake Bronson Club 206/793-0286, and Fraternity Snoqualmie 206/392-6833, landed clothing-optional resorts within western Washington, are within 100 miles of the Olympia area. In addition, The Slugs, a naturist club based in the Seattle area, has a home page at http://www.breathof.com/slugs

For those who wish to read more before embarking on a nude holiday, I've included Crystal's and Sandy's stories (briefly quoted in the article) on my own Web Page at http://www.randomc.com/ESA/plogan.shtml. If anyone has questions for me, I can be reached by email through the web page, directly at QYNS85A@prodigy.com or by phone at 360/491-3171.

Patti Anne Logan

Thank You St. Martin's

Dear Works In Progress

In fairness to St. Martin's and the Catholic Church please print my letter.

The monks, staff and students of St. Martin's College helped me when I needed it most. During the mid-1980s I was hospitalized at St. Peter's for mental illness. Upon my return, my teachers were very kind and understanding and supportive. The kindness and support helped me to get better. I had many long talks with the monks. The monks of St. Martin's are great people. If you go to the eleven o'clock mass on Sunday morning at the Abbey Church you cannot help but be moved by the Priests and Brothers. Their reverence and dedication to God are obvious.

Like many folks in my age group I quit going to mass in my late teens. I practiced Buddhist meditation for a few years. Buddhism is a wonderful religion but I was not at peace. I have gone back to the Catholic Church. My goal for the years of my life I have left is to live in constant awareness of the ever present reality of God.

I invite everyone to join our Catholic family. The Catholic Church is the most diverse on Earth. From Africa to South America to Olympia, WA, we pledge to combine a dedication to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with a life of caring and giving to the poor. Let the inner peace of Jesus Christ dwell inside you. As you do this, you might notice the beauty of the trees and the birds. You might become aware of the spiritual splendor of every moment.

Tom Kenstowicz

Safeplace Fall Training

Safeplace Rape Relief and Women's Shelter Services is now recruiting volunteers. Fall training begins October 8, 1996. Applications must be received by September 18th. Safeplace needs people who are interested in advocacy/counseling, support group facilitation, community education, fundraising, clerical, maintenance, and more. Currently our greatest priority is volunteers who want to work with children. For more information please call Safeplace at 786-8754, TDD accessible.

September AARP Meeting

Featuring Gene Liddell & REACT

September 23 10 AM
Group Health Cooperative
Second Floor Room B
700 Lilly Rd SE

Liddell, former Mayor of Lacey, currently serves as a community organizer for the Heart Attack REACT program. With the assistance of a slide show, she will provide critical information on how to know if someone is having a heart attack and what to do about it. What you learn at this meeting could save a life --and that life could be yours!

AARP is an organization devoted to promoting the well-being of mid-life and senior citizens aged 50 or more. For more information, call 438-3864. A Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons, Inc.

A Gift

Stone Woman
Proudly standing on the river bank
Circular saw scars around your belly
Where I was taken from
A bond stronger than moving air
Pulls me to you.
Your long, flowing red hair
dives in the wind
Spirits blowing you kisses
As you whisper into my fears
Contentment
The secrets of the Earth holding
Stone Woman erect.
Here stones turn to sand as they
Always do
Return to the sea the care of
Our gifts to be carried
home by entwined lovers
close to open hearts
dancing the eternal flame
held in your soul

Sonya Bedillion

WIP Schedule

Submission deadline:
Friday, Sept 20th

Meeting place TBA
Call 705-2726 for info.

Proofreading Meeting

Tuesday, Sept 24 at 7 pm
Oly Timberland Library
downtown Olympia

Advertising Info

⇨ Dave Campbell at 352-6132

Inch Rate $7.50
Business Card .. $20
Special Non-Profit Rates

WORKS IN PROGRESS: PO Box 295 Olympia, WA 98507 (360) 705-2726

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Mission Statement: "Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause: We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Greg Bye
Dave Campbell
Tom Freeman
Greg Hohnholt
Craig Hymson
Teresa Jennings
Jerome Johnson
Evelyn Montague
Wendy Ortiz
Hali Panneton
Tara Perkins
CJ Russo
Marie Smith
Sylvia Smith
Pat Tassoni
Dave Zink

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Correspondence/articles are always welcome. Articles on disk (text preferred). WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507.

LETTERS & BRIEFS

UFW Activities

• The UFW continues to build on the momentum generated by organizing victories of the past two years. Most noteworthy is the five-year contract signed in May with Bruce Church, Inc. (BCI), one of this country's largest lettuce producers. Farmworkers struck BCI's Salinas operations in 1979, leading to a 17-year nationwide boycott of Red Coach brand lettuce and to BCI's multi-million dollar lawsuit against the UFW. (Cesar Chavez's death occurred while he was in Yuma, Arizona to give testimony in the BCI case.) The contract agreement brings both the boycott and the lawsuit to an end.

• Salinas is also the site of the UFW's crop-wide campaign organizing 15,000 strawberry workers whose wages have not increased in a decade.

• A key campaign involves 85 mushroom workers fired by Quincy Farms in Quincy, Florida for seeking UFW representation. Grocery chains Harvey's and Sedano's, with 60 stores combined in the Southeastern U.S., are honoring the UFW's boycott of Prime Label mushrooms, Quincy Farms' brand.

• Depoe Bay/Artic Alaska cannery in Newport asked for overtime pay for their 12 hour holiday shift, but were ordered out. After a short strike Depoe Bay owner Jerry Bates relented, listened to the workers' grievances, and negotiated. Workers won re-instatement, plus promises of no retailiation, more respectful treatment, union recognition, and negotiations on pay for future holidays.

• PCUN continues to urge supporters of organizing in the Willamette Valley, Oregon to boycott Steinfeld's FLAV-R-PAC, Santiam, and Wholesome & Healthy Foods GardenBurgers.

Statewide and Prison Disability

Washington State Rainbow Coalition Recording Secretary, Nancy D. San Carlos, announced she has just received an honor from the state.

Governor Lowry has appointed her to the Governor's Committee on disabilities Issues and Employment. The term runs from 4/96 through 12/31/98.

Nancy is in her fifteenth year of having Systemic Lupus and struggles to get along with a small fixed monthly income, dealing with DSHS, and all the other problems the majority of folks with disabilities face.

She has received another recent honor, coming our of her volunteer program at the Reformatory in Monroe. SHIP is an "extremely unfunded and non-profit" organization. The program works with prisoners who are physically disabled, chronically or terminally ill.

In the course of this work over the past three years, she met Jean Marie Christenson, who was writing a book on the prison system.

When *Keepers and the Caged* was published in late March, Nancy felt honored that an earlier interview resulted in Chapter 20 of Christenson's book.

She urges everyone interested in the prison system to buy this book: "I've read a few hundred books on the subject over the past 30 years. This very east-to-read book has the widest range of input I've ever encountered.

Keepers and the Caged does not preach or moralize. It *does* offer the reader a rare opportunity into the system in the words of everyone interviewed: prisoners, administrators, corrections officers and others who do this work.

Anyone interested in more information, can call Nancy at (206) 392-8222, after 10:30am please!

Sidewalk Victory = Civil Rights Victory

On August 6th, the Olympia City Council voted to table the No Sitting on the Sidewalk ordinance.

• This law would have been redundant as Olympia already has a No Blocking the Sidewalk ordinance -- *Something else must have been the issue, I wonder what that was?*

• The cops assured us that it wouldn't have been used much anyway -- *So what was the point?*

We Preserved What Rights We Still Have To Public Space. We made our city recognize that the streets are not halls in a shopping mall and restricted to use only by those who are consuming constantly downtown. Certain businesses asked for the ordinance and have lobbied for it. *We stomped them!*

We Kept The Cops From Gaining More Power. The No-Sitting law would have given the police more discretionary power to harass our community's homeless people and youth. The cops played an active role in defining the ordinance and did research catered to proving the need for the ordinance. *We stomped them!*

We Stood Together Against A Stupid Policy. This proposed ordinance brought together a wide range of community members to stand up for each other: youth, homeless, civil rights activists, artists, artisans, peddlers, and others. *Let's keep in touch!*

Remember & Is It Over?

Remember Mayor Bob Jacobs was the only one who still held out and voted not to table the ordinance. Even though the ordinance is not withdrawn from the books and could come back at some future time to again threaten us and our community. This ordinance was just the most recent in a series of laws aimed at our homeless and youth. Other ordinances include No Cruising, No Skateboarding, No Youth Dance Halls, No Aggressive Panhandling, No Fortified Wine, Alley Closure, and No CarCamping (also tabled).

The following Olympia downtown merchants expressed to the City Council in a petition that they did not support an ordinance that prohibits sitting on sidewalks:

Always Safe & Lock
Brown & Balsley Sign Co.
Bulldog News
Cascadia Research
Childhood's End Gallery
Danger Room
Earth Magic
Five Corners
Fuji Teriyaki
Haut Hats
Jamie Lee and Co.
K Records
Kill Rock Stars Productions
Kundalini Coffee Co.
Levity Cafe
M & M Second Hand Store
Mini Saigon
Old School Pizzeria
Oz Bookstore
Proffitt's Cafe
Ritzi Rags
Tee's Me
Three Cities FM Inc (MIXX 96)
Thousand Cranes Futons
Whole Earth Imports
Working Systems Inc.
Yo Yo Productions

EXTRA
It's not what I heard, saw or said

The following letter was posted to the Pleasant Peasant's Restaurant window and the subsequent information was given to Works In Progress as part of this story.

Dear Olympians,

I have a beef with our local Newspaper, The Daily Olympian. In their August 7, 1996 edition, they misquoted me. They perceived incorrectly and then printed it as a direct quote.

The Story was covering the August 6 city council meeting, specifically the open debate on whether or not the city should be given the right to ticket anyone sitting on, laying on, or otherwise impeding foot traffic on Olympia's Downtown Sidewalks.

I, a downtown business owner, was representing 28 other downtown businesses and presented them with the names of each one. My presentation was short, I was nervous, and I closed by saying, "Just vote against this, because it is not a good idea."

The Daily 0 read, "Just vote against this, because it is not a cool idea."

A small difference in vocabulary I agree, but the image created by the substitution of the word 'cool' is not one I appreciated. I think it depicts a youngster, who is more worried about image than issue. Plus, I did not say it. Although I am young, 27, I put long hours in at my restaurant and truly feel that this ordinance will only create a more agitated atmosphere downtown. The Ordinance is not just uncool, more than that it is not a good ordinance.

Andrew F. Macy
The Pleasant Peasant

You know what else? You should watch the meeting on TCTV, you may gain new insight regarding exactly what kind of people make very big decisions that affect us (that is the City Council, Olympia Police Department and Parks Department.) You can then see for yourself whether or not, as the Olympian printed, the group (public) at the open forum were really split down the middle in numbers. It's not what I heard, saw or said.

After writing this letter and dropping it off personally at the Olympian, I almost got to talk to the guy who was responsible for the misprint. But instead of getting to talk to him, I left after about 15 minutes of waiting. He then called me and explained that a "number" of his friends had heard me say "cool" also. He said, though, he would print a retraction. I looked in the Olympian for the next 2 days (not wanting to fill my head up with much more of that nonsense) and I found no retraction.

Oh well, I expected as much.

LABOR DAY 1996

SEPTEMBER 2 NOON TO 7

SYLVESTER PARK , OLYMPIA

"Celebrating Our Diverse Labor Community"

- Peace Party
- The Citizens Band
- Po'okela Street Band
- La Onda
- Los Calaveras
- Mas-Uda Dancers
- Bailles Mexicanos
- Tai Chi Demo
- Lehua Nani
- Orissi Dance

SPEAKERS, HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES, FOOD, UNION & SOCIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZING BOOTHS

Sponsored by: The Evergreen State College Labor Center, the Thurston/Lewis Counties Labor Council, the Washington Federation of State Employees L443

WE URGE GANNET CORPORATION TO IMMEDIATELY NEGOTIATE A FAIR CONTRACT WITH ITS' WORKERS INCLUDING THE PRESSMEN AT THE DAILY OLYMPIAN AND THE STRIKING GUILD MEMBERS IN DETROIT !

LETTERS & BRIEFS

CopWatching Continues

On Tuesday, August 6th, CopWatch informed the city at the Olympia City Council meeting of an incident of apparent excessive force. A citizen witnessed and filed a formal complaint. He stated that the police handcuffed someone downtown; and while the individual was in restraints and being knelt on by the police and screaming "I can't breathe!", the police pepper sprayed him.

The following was presented by Pat Tassoni:

CopWatch publicizes and otherwise records and makes public incidents of police brutality that would otherwise go unheard. Our number is 352-6543.

In the spring issue of Covert Action Quarterly, Seattle attorney and Steering Committee member of the National Coalition on Police Accountability wrote an article entitled "Pepper Spray Madness." I will pass this copy along to you. In this article, she profiles a weapon that is a contributing factor to in-custody deaths, 60 such deaths in 1990.

According to the American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology, the spray is 600 times hotter than cayenne pepper. Quoting from Wilson's article:

> Imagine that someone has sprayed a substance 600 times hotter than cayenne pepper into your face eyes and nostrils. Imagine that while this is happening, your hands are cuffed behind your back. Or you have asthma or bronchitis. Or a heart condition. Or you're drunk or just plain upset. Chances are the pain will be intense, breathing will become difficult, your eyes will swell into blindness, you will become disoriented and fall to the ground. Fear and panic will set in. If you are unlucky enough to be in an altercation with the police and you are in restraints on your stomach, you may die.

That's the real important part, let me repeat it: "If you are in restraints on your stomach, you may die."

The pain from pepper spray can last up to 45 minutes and is being asked to be defined as a form of torture by the United Nations. The effects of causing suffocation actually makes a person more difficult to control. In this instance, the police's purpose was to stop the victim's struggling. The response to someone's inability to breathe is to use a chemical that causes difficulty in breathing.

This is the second witnessed and testified incident in recent months where excessive spraying was mentioned. The first was when a man was sprayed three times at point blank range, two of which happened with an open wound. At that meeting, the Mayor dismissed the death of Danny Spencer as having any bearing. Danny Spencer died in custody after having been beat into unconsciousness by the OPD. He was then hog-tied and placed on his stomach in a position known to cause death.

Not so much has changed when police practice excessive techniques that often result in death. We were lucky this time and the man did not die, and the city does not have to face another wrongful death suit.

The council needs to be aware of this kind of ongoing situation and take a leadership role in defining Police Procedures and the actual practices that employ excessive force. Pepper spraying handcuffed victims lying on their stomachs with an officer's knee on them should not be tolerated.

The public has a right to know the outcome of this complaint through publication or otherways.

Community Harmony & the Equinox Benefit

by Chris Scofield

Metaphorically speaking, creating a harmonious community has a lot in common with making music. Composing music or writing songs is a complex and mysterious act, but the process is relatively simple: you use the tools of tone, timing and organization to create harmony. And what is harmony? Well, there is a generic conception that harmony equals sweetness; and it can. But truly, harmony is about combining contrasting and dissonant elements, in motion, to produce an overall mood, message, or image. A great composer merges dissonance and consonance without prejudice, knowing that in the blending and balancing of these two there is a wondrous beauty born. Our community and all communities are, in essence, a combination of contrasting and sometimes dissonant elements. A wise community, like a great work of music, incorporates all of these elements into a rich, dynamic blend.

However, within our national a local community today there are powerful groups seeking to isolate, reject, and ultimately destroy those elements of our society which they consider disharmonious, because they believe these elements threaten their concept of a pure and consonant nation. The efforts of these groups remind me of the Medieval European Christian Church's attempts to forbid certain blendings of notes in musical compositions because these combinations were evil and unholy. To the "enlightened" 20th century mind, this attitude, in this context, seems absurd. Yet in so many ways, the current efforts of our mainstream leaders and their followers are driven by equally archaic motivations. These people seem to believe that if we would just get rid of the "icky" parts, our society will be sweet and happy -- I guess you could call it the "elevator-music concept" of social engineering. Through incarceration, exclusion, restriction, denial, and media-generated blinders, they seek to create a "better world." Locally, this attitude manifests itself in efforts to drive human-aid facilities out of business areas, and to restrict the citizens' use of their own sidewalks. And if you've been keeping up with "the news", you know the momentum behind these efforts isn't exactly slowing down. But what can you do? What can we do?

Well, I guess it boils down to two words: "get involved." The antidote for exclusion is inclusion -- include yourself, become a part of the harmony of your community. Granted, your participation can take so many forms it's hard to know where to start, but don't let that stop you. For example, you could be part of a benefit concert for Works In Progress and Westport Wobblers (see related article, this issue) featuring the music of the local band Naked.

Naked is producing this event to generate money in support of the continuing success of these two organizations. Naked's name is meant to be a statement about certain human qualities which we all share; their songs and music are their way of shedding a little light on modern life and sharing a little light with their fellow travelers. Naked's sound is hard to categorize, but one description reads: "original songs with rock, blues, and jazz flavors, thoughtful lyrics about affairs of the world and affairs of the heart, comfortably loud, honestly played."

The term "playing music" is well chosen -- music is supposed to be fun, performed in the spirit of play. With a good crowd, that is what Naked is all about. So come on out to the Midnight Sun on the Autumnal Equinox, and have fun being a part of the harmony, a part of your community. The show will be at the Midnight Sun on 113 N. Columbia St. on Saturday, September 21st from 8pm-midnight; $2 donation at the door.

Union Busting

Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton

by Don Schaber

The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) has announced its plan to convert more than half of the jobs of the Planners, Estimators, Progressmen and Schedulers (PEPS) unit from blue collar to white collar positions.

"If that happens, it will completely wipe out the PEPS Unit at PSNS," stated Mark Moshay, President of PEPS Local 6. "We're in a state of shock at the blatant attack that the Shipyard launched against our union and the employees. We were prepared for the possibility that management would present such a plan, but we never imagined that they would try to ram it down our throats without even allowing us the opportunity to bargain."

I was told by Frank Sharkey, the Director of the Human Resources Office, that management plans to move all Code 200 employees to 'interim positions,' on August 19, the beginning of the new pay period. There have been rumors that the Nuclear Engineering and Planning Department plans to follow suit, as well as the Public Works Department and the Ocean Engineering Division.

I believe that the Shipyard is trying to accomplish several goals with this hurried plan. First, they are trying to silence the PEPS union, which has been critical of the yard's leadership on many issues, including the sudden dumping of valuable material, the holiday closure and the current Reduction In Force (RIF).

But the primary goal in management's attack on the PEPS Union is to combine all trade skilled employees with engineering technicians, in order to make it easier to RIF these employees in coming years. The theory is simple, management wants to protect their "degreed engineers." By moving all non-degreed engineers into on generic position, they simply eliminate employees from this group to save their engineers.

It's not only PEPS employees who are under attack. The engineering technicians will experience a double assault. Because, most PEPS employees are older, with more years of service, many are veterans. This will mean that those techs who are near the bottom of the Retention Register will find themselves at the bottom of a much larger register, thus making them more vulnerable in a RIF.

By transferring employees out of the PEP'S unit and into IFPTE Local 12 jurisdiction, management argues that the PEPS union will no longer be able to negotiate on behalf of those employees.

The PEPS Union is an affiliate local of the IFPTE International.

"We had a signed Memorandum of Agreement in place last August. Then, in March, the IFPTE union withdrew their signature from the MOA. We informed management that they were still bound to the agreement. For the next five months we heard nothing and then WHAM, they dropped the hammer. We are working with our International staff to resolve the issues surrounding the actions of IFPTE Local 12 leadership in this issue. Basically, the employer smelled blood when Local 12 pulled out of the MOA and now we are facing the loss of our entire unit. We will not sit idly by," said Moshay.

Thus far, the PEPS Union has filed an Unfair Labor Practice for the repudiation of the MOA by the Shipyard. They have also filed a ULP against PSNS for meeting with employees without allowing the Union to bargain over the proposal to convert unit positions.

They are asking all former employees, family members and those in the community who are sympathetic to their situation to write letters to local newspapers and their legislators.

The International Association of Machinists at Boeing are going through the same kind of attack; management is arbitrarily taking 2,000 of their employees out of the bargaining unit. It seems that union busting is just as popular in the private sector as it is in the public sector.

For more information contact:
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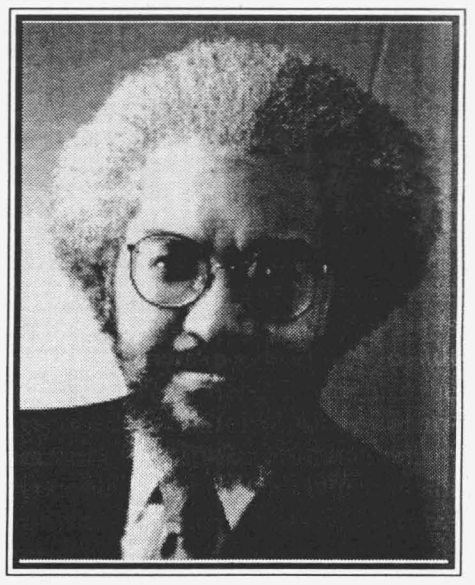
Along the Color Line

Asian Americans and African Americans: Toward a Multicultural Dialogue



Dr. Manning Marable

Racial minorities—African Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Island Americans, American Indians and Hispanics—are growing more than seven times faster than non-Hispanic whites. Much of this population explosion has occurred in only the past decade. Nationwide in 1990, minorities accounted for about 61 million Americans, representing 25 percent of the country's total population. By the year 2000, that percentage will have increased to nearly one-third of the U.S. population. According to demographers, the entire United States will have a "majority minority" by the year 2060. Issues of multicultural diversity will become even more central to all aspects of American life.

Racial minorities themselves must engage in a critical, honest dialogue about their areas of mutual concern. Certainly one dimension of that discussion must occur between Asian Americans and African Americans. Asian Americans are the most rapidly-growing group in the U.S. Today, there are more than 7.5 million people of Asian descent in this country.

Like African Americans and Latinos, Asian Americans have experienced a history of discrimination and oppression. As early as 1854, the California Supreme Court ruled that Chinese weren't permitted to testify against whites. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act banned all immigration from China. As Japanese immigration to the U.S. grew, discriminatory legislation was extended to them. In 1913 California prohibited aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning property. The 1924 National Origins Act excluded most Asians from migrating to the U.S. With the outbreak of World War II, 110,000 Japanese Americans were relocated to internment camps. It was only in 1952 that Asians born outside the U.S. were permitted to become citizens. African Americans have not been alone in their search for a nonracist democracy.

Conversely, an appraisal of racial and ethnic realities today illustrates profound differences between minority groups. Blacks and most Latinos, for example, continue to be subjected to extreme economic and social discrimination, while most Asian Americans are not. According to Census surveys, the median household income in 1989 of Asian Americans was $36,100, compared to $30,400 for non-Hispanic white households.

According to the Census Bureau's 1987 Survey of Minority-owned Business Enterprises, the number of Asian-American-owned businesses in the U.S. grew from 187,691 in 1982 to 335,331 in 1987, an increase of 79 percent. By 1987, about six percent of all Asian Americans owned a business of some type, compared to 6.5 percent of all non-Hispanic whites, two percent of all Latinos, 1.5 percent of all black Americans, and one percent of American Indians.

Similarly, in terms of access to higher education, there are real differences between minority groups. Although African-American and Latino college enrollments reached 1.4 million and 1 million respectively by 1993, both were well underrepresented, based on their percentages of the general population. Between 1976 and 1992, the number of African Americans who received both master's degrees and doctorates actually declined. Conversely, access to higher education for Asian Americans increased significantly during these same years.

From 1976 to 1993, the number of Asian Americans enrolled in colleges and universities soared from 198,000 to 724,000. In academic year 1992-1993, Asian Americans were awarded more doctorates (1580) than African Americans (1350) and Latinos (830), and earned more professional degrees (5,160) than blacks (4,100) or Latinos (2,980). So while the overall proportion of degrees earned by racial minorities has sharply increased, the actual status of individual groups varies significantly. These statistics may explain why Latinos and African Americans overwhelmingly support affirmative action programs and minority scholarships, while a large percentage of Asian Americans do not.

We are rapidly moving beyond the older "blacks/white" model of race and ethnic relations in the U.S., and African Americans must recognize the impact of this social transformation. We need to recognize that within the Asian-American population that there are many nationalities and communities whose interests parallel our own. Areas of political and economic tension, such as the burning and destruction of Korean-owned stores during the Los Angeles uprising in 1992, or the racially-motivated discrimination against blacks by Asian merchants, have to be openly discussed. A strategy for black empowerment must have the ability to build coalitions based on mutual self-interest with others.

Racial minorities themselves must engage in a critical, honest dialogue about their areas of mutual concern...Asian Americans are the most rapidly-growing group in the U.S. Today, there are more than 7.5 million people of Asian descent in this country.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of History and Director, Institute for Research in African-American Studies, Columbia University, New York. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 275 publications across the U.S. and internationally. ◆

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From the Inside Out

They Call Them 'Control Units'

Dan Pens

I watched a television documentary recently about the infamous Alcatraz federal prison. The island prison was purchased from the military by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and converted into a prison for "the worst of the worst." The name Alcatraz still reverberates in the American psyche as the toughest prison ever built. The Alcatraz portrayed in the documentary, however, seems like a "country club" compared to the grim reality of the worst prisons operating today.

Prisoners in Alcatraz were allowed out of their cells to work (under contract to the War Department, producing items for use by the military). On weekends and evenings they were allowed to stroll in a large outside recreation yard. There they could play baseball or basketball, enjoy the view of the bay, play cards, or just sit and talk with friends. Alcatraz prisoners regularly gathered in an auditorium to watch movies.

Compared to prisons of its day, life in Alcatraz was indeed grim. Compared to the worst that prisons have to offer today, however, it was idyllic.

In 1983 federal prisoncrats revived the phrase "the worst of the worst" to justify a permanent lockdown at the federal prison at Marion, Illinois. BOP officials called Marion the new Alcatraz. Unlike the old Alcatraz, however, Marion prisoners were locked in their tiny cells 23.5 hours a day.

Soon after Marion went on permanent lockdown, the BOP began transferring "the worst of the worst" from other federal prisons to Marion. It became a prototype for a new style of prison management. They call such prisons "Control Units" or "SuperMax" prisons.

In 1989 California opened Pelican Bay prison, the first modern state-of-the-art Control Unit prison designed from the ground up. About 1,500 prisoners are isolated in Pelican Bay's two Security Housing Units (SHU). The physical layout of the SHU was specifically designed to reduce visual stimulation. The cells are windowless concrete tombs with a solid steel door. One prisoner fairly described the SHU as being "like in a space capsule where one is shot into space and left in isolation."

Compared to prisons of its day, life in Alcatraz was indeed grim. Compared to the worst that prisons have to offer today, however, it was idyllic.

Opportunities for social interaction with other humans is essentially eliminated. Food trays are shoved through a slot in the door three times a day. Because of the prison's location on the extreme northern border with Oregon, few prisoners receive visits from loved ones from down state. Visits are conducted with the prisoner shackled behind a thick glass partition. SHU prisoners are allowed no phone calls.

If Marion was the prototype for Control Unit management, Pelican Bay became the prototype for Control Unit design and construction. According to the American Friends Service Committee's national office in Philadelphia, PA, more than 40 Control Unit prisons house more than 15,000 prisoners nationwide, including the new federal prison in Florence, Colorado, glibly referred to as the "Alcatraz of the Rockies."

The Florence Control Unit is called Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX). Prisoners are housed in "boxcar" cells. The walls are solid concrete. The front wall of the cell is standard prison bars, but three feet beyond that is another thick concrete wall with a solid steel door in it. Prisoners have virtually no contact with each other and often spend years in total isolation.

In 1990, prisoners in Pelican Bay's SHU filed lawsuits against the harsh conditions of their high-tech dungeon. The lawsuits were consolidated into a class action suit and counsel was appointed. The suit contested a litany of brutal conditions: serious medical and mental health care deficiencies; routine beatings and torture with stun guns, high-velocity rubber dum-dum bullets fired into their cells, prisoners "hog-tied" or chained to their toilets; and more. In addition, however, the very design/management concept of the SHU was challenged. Lawyers representing Pelican Bay prisoners claimed that the SHU Control Unit *itself* was "cruel and unusual."

Expert witnesses, psychiatrists and psychologists, testified that "when human beings are subjected to social isolation and reduced environmental stimulation, they may deteriorate mentally and in some cases develop... perceptual distortions, hallucinations, hypersensitivity to external stimuli, aggressive fantasies, overt paranoia, inability to concentrate, and problems with impulse control...This series of symptoms has been discussed using various terminology; however, one common label is 'Reduced Environmental Stimulation' or RES."

The court ruled in 1995 that "many, if not most, inmates in the SHU experience some degree of psychological trauma in reaction to their extreme social isolation and the severely restricted environmental stimulation in the SHU." The court went on to say, however, that "we are not persuaded that the SHU, as currently operated, violates Eight Amendment Standards [prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment] vis-a-vis all inmates." The court said that SHU imprisonment was improper for certain subgroups of prisoners, consisting of the "already mentally ill, as well as persons with borderline personality disorders, brain damage, or mental retardation, impulse-ridden personalities, or a history of prior psychiatric problems or chronic depression. For these inmates, placing them in the SHU is equivalent of putting an asthmatic in a place with little air to breathe."

By stopping short of declaring Control Unit imprisonment cruel and unusual in and of itself, this federal court set a legal precedent that allows the continued entombing of "the worst of the worst" in Control Units across the country.

•••••

Who are these prisoners? The worst of the worst? That phrase, as described by one federal ADX prisoner, is "a soundbite which condenses nigger, spic, white trash, jobless, homeless, useless underclass into one dehumanizing phrase."

Prison officials routinely describe the worst of the worst as violent, predatory prisoners who have proven to be a "management problem."

In reality, though, the most troublesome "management problems" are often dissenters, political organizers, activists, prison union organizers, and especially jailhouse lawyers.

Former Marion warden Ralph Aaron, who has since become an opponent of Control Unit prisons, once said: "The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in the society at large."

Ray Luc Levasseur, a federal prisoner, political activist and long-time Control Unit captive is one such "management problem" with a revolutionary attitude. He wrote in *Prison Legal News* about his experiences at Marion and then at Florence ADX:

"Whether in this prison or elsewhere, the majority [of Control Unit prisoners] have been subjected to police assaults, beatings, gas, clubs, prolonged restraints, drugs, anal probes, degradations, harassment, psychological abuse, rape and mistreatment of all sorts. The U.S. calls this 'torture' when referring to other governments."

Like some states, Washington doesn't have a "SuperMax" prison per se. Nonetheless, there are two Control Units, referred to as "Intensive Management Units" (IMU), one located inside the prison at Shelton and the other in Walla Walla. They are literally "prisons within prisons." Each IMU contains 120 isolation cells where prisoners are entombed around the clock.

Many prisoners are tossed into Control Unit waste bins for the remainder of their sentences. They are then released directly into the community. Residents of Crescent City, California, the small town adjacent to Pelican Bay Prison, lobbied the California legislature to enact a law requiring the California Department of Corrections to transport released Pelican Bay prisoners back to their home counties. They had previously been given a bus ticket and unleashed on Crescent City, committed mayhem, and thereby reinforced the "worst of the worst" propaganda.

One Control Unit prisoner wrote that citizens who become victimized by Control Unit alumni should ask themselves the following: "Will the billions spent on state-of-the-art SuperMax prisons buy back the lost lives of those whom they thought they were protecting with their tax dollars? It won't. The funds that could have been invested in human services and community development were pissed away down bottomless sinkholes of violence, heartache and the illusion that repression will provide security."

•••••

Efforts to stem the tide of Control Unit proliferation through litigation have so far proven fruitless. Courts have given the Constitutional Seal of Approval to Control Units. Any reversal of the trend to rely on ever more repressive forms of imprisonment such as Control Units will likely only occur as a result of political activism and organizing of both prisoners and free citizens — or as a result of a bloody uprising and massacre such the Attica rebellion which took place 25 years ago this month. Attica should never happen again. The high incarceration rate in the U.S. is a shame, not a success. Control Unit torture of prisoners is a crime, not a solution.

Dan Pens is co-editor of Prison Legal News. *A free sample of* PLN *is available upon request by writing to:*
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Monroe, WA 98272-0888 ◆

STOP CONTROL UNIT PRISONS

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CUT THE CRAP

FrankenDole Cometh

Rev. Laurian Weisser

Editor's note: This month, Works in Progress is pleased to present a guest editorialist for Cut the Crap. The Reverand Laurian Weisser responds to Greg Hohnholt's continuing diatribes against Bill Clinton. If you've got a rant inside you and would like to write for this column, give Greg a call at 352-5780.

Dear readers, the honorable Greg Hohnholt, and my deepest apologies to my mother:

I understand that Cut the Crap is fixated on the Failed Clinton administration, but I feel there is a greater evil wandering our political landscape. I thank Greg for this time to address what I see as a danger second only to Pat Buchanan and The Order: Bob Dole.

FrankenDole. An out-of-control monster spawned by the worst the ruling corporate class has to offer, is senselessly wandering the land of the sound bite thrashing about, unaware or unconcerned with how he is making a total fool of himself. Nothing but becoming President Bobdole matters to him anymore not his honor, not the future of his party, not ideology, not ethics, not the truth, not even what is best for the country matters to him or his handlers anymore.

He is a hollow man who is not to be trusted or believed. Whatever moral compass or ideology he might have held at one moment or another in his life have disappeared in puff of smoke and is mirrored in his insatiable lust for executive power. Bobdole the Common Senator and lifetime political hack. This man has kissed butt longer than the recipients of his favors could stay unindicted, elected, or alive, and now, Bobdole is giving the citizenry of this nation a great big raspberry. I'd say it's time to return his affections with interest.

Whoa, wait a sec, aren't I describing Dick Nixon here? -I feel your hypocrisy

Poor Bobdole, all that he has sown over the last forty years of his career is now rotting in the field for all to see. Bobdole has become a Supply Sider for reasons of political expediency by claiming that a 15% across-the-board tax cut will not add to the deficit.

Uh, yeah. And pigs can fly.

"The newly released economic opportunity of our proposed tax roll back will more than make up for the lost tax revenue, employ millions, end welfare as we know it, blah, blah, blah." Come on, kids, We've been here before. Remember Ronald Reagan, David Stockman, hell, Jack Kemp for that matter? Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me.

Bobdole the Common Senator and lifetime political hack. This man has kissed butt longer than the recipients of his favors could stay unindicted, elected, or alive, and now, Bobdole is giving the citizenry of this nation a great big raspberry.

We are faced with social problems that threaten to turn this nation into a third world has-been, problems that can only be addressed on a national level. Where are the great initiatives that have made this the most powerful and productive nation on the face of the earth? We can't afford them. We're still paying off the deficit that the evil cabal rang up like a gang of drunken, rape-minded sailors in the Eighties

FrankenDole knew better. Where was he during the Reagan years, you ask? When he wasn't doing his legislative best to thwart the Reagan revolution, he was on the Larry King show telling jokes like this one, to wit: "Did you hear about the bus load of supply siders that went over a cliff? It's a good news, bad news thing. Good news was all aboard died. The bad news was there were three empty seats." Uh. Uhm. Geez, Bob, I feel your hypocrisy or whatever.

Fear and whoring on the campaign trail

What really scares me about Dr. StrangeDole is that his rampant political whoring has made discussing campaign issues moot. Between him and President Waffle there are no issues, only reaction to one poll or another. For example, Bobdole came in dead last in a NBC poll that asked the amerikan public which national politician they would like most to eat breakfast with. (From last to first, it went Bobdole, Hillary, Bill, and leading the pack, Colin Powell.)

In the end, a vote for Bobdole is a vote for all that is wrong with capitalist democracy. He is a living (?), breathing (?), example of the fallacy of left/right politics being polar opposites, rather than a continuum that eventually circles back on itself. United by the horror of Frankendole, editorialists of both the Nation and the New Republic are now doing lunch.

Sure signs that the Bobdole campaign is in deep doo-doo are the rolling eyes, hunched shoulders, and suppressed giggles that arise whenever his name is mentioned in polite company. No one takes him seriously. I suspect he doesn't even take himself seriously. What Bobdole's thousand of campaign volunteers think, however, is an open question. I can see staying the course on a sinking ship with the guarantee of a fat salary and

first class seats on the first lifeboat off the ship, but what hole in the lives of these lemmings does working on this doomed campaign address? Maybe Bobdole supporters are not-so-closeted S&M fans. Maybe these are that same people who don't just buy an occasional copy of the *Weekly World News*, but ***subscribe*** so as not to miss a single scoop on Satan appearing in hurricanes or space aliens advising our elected leaders. Maybe these are the people who still believe in Santa and that we are in the Final Days. Maybe they know something we don't.

Nah! Bobdole supporters are as dumb as a box of rocks.

This just in, Kemp for VP

What!?! Jack Kemp?!! Oh, wait a sec, he's who the Repubs really want, but Jack didn't have the balls to run. Repubs figure Bobdole can cruise around the world on Air Force One for a couple of years and then resign for health reasons. The result? A Ronnie Reagan reprise without Alzheimer's or the bother and expense of mounting a campaign and actually being elected.

On second thought, the Kemp thing shouldn't surprise me in the least. Bobdole eats more crow and Jack gets the best chance he will ever have at the White House. Who cares if just six months ago Kemp endorsed Bobdole's rival Steve Forbes, in the political equivalent of giving Bobdole the finger. But Jack's already flipped him the bird, and I quote: Bob Dole's library burned to the ground destroying all two books; one he hadn't finished coloring. Ouch, dude. Megahard diss. But who cares if they've been at ideological logger heads for thirty years? Let bygones be bygones, *et tu, brut?*

Can't you just imagine the mid-August conversation in Russell, Kansas? "All we have to do Jack is reel in the fattened calf, get elected, write our memoirs, build our presidential libraries while we enjoy the perks of the office. Piece of cake. Let's just hope there's good news in November. Say, Jack, can you call a couple of your Wall Street buddies and engineer us a market scare sometime in late October? Oh, you can? I see. I knew I could count on you. By the way, this conversation never happened." "Yessum, boss."

Generally speaking, things have gone about as far as they can go when things have got about as bad as they can reasonably get. I'm truly frightened by the prospect that things still have a way to go.

The Reverand Laurian Weisser directs the TV version of Cut the Crap, and is a volunteer organizer for the Brian Baird for Congress campaign. ◆

"Arouse our dreams
satisfy our hunger
for beauty
take us on journeys
enable us
to participate
in events
present great drama
and music
and address itself
to the ideal
of excellence
not the idea of
acceptability."

– E.B. White

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Notes From the South

Carolina Farm Workers on The March, K-Mart Workers Win Three-Year Struggle

Paul Ortiz

In perhaps the first farm worker march in the history of Clinton, North Carolina, over one hundred agricultural laborers and their supporters gathered on July 21 to protest the death of Raymundo Hernandez and the horrible working conditions that **campesinos** face in the state.

Sr. Hernandez (1956-1995) died after only one day's toil on a Sampson County tobacco farm owned by grower Jart Hudson on July 21, 1995. Fellow farm workers have argued that illegal pesticide spraying was the root cause of Hernandez's death. After Hernandez became dizzy and began vomiting (classic pesticide poisoning symptoms), he was seen getting into the back of Hudson's truck. Supposedly, the farmer was taking Raymundo Hernandez to a hospital for treatment, but when Hudson returned just five minutes later, without Hernandez, the other tobacco workers grew suspicious.

In October, Mr. Hernandez's remains were discovered by dogs in an open field in Sampson County near Hudson's farm. Subsequent "investigations" conducted by the county officials and the State Labor Department after Hernandez's death were tinged with racist overtones. One sheriff told the media that he saw nothing strange in Raymundo's disappearance since "those people [Latino farm workers] wander off all the time anyway." Jart Hudson was quickly exonerated and treated by many as if **he** was the real victim in the case. The Labor Department neglected to talk to many of the farm workers who wanted to testify regarding Hernandez's disappearance.

A year later, Hernandez's family, living in dire poverty in Mexico, has yet to receive the workers' compensation benefits they are entitled to.

The Proyecto de Trabajadores Agricolas (Farm Worker's Project) called the march to protest employer's exploitation of farm laborers in North Carolina, as well as the state's inability to enforce agricultural safety laws. We saw the march as a way to help ensure that Raymundo Hernandez will not be forgotten. In addition, march participants wanted to call attention to the right of farm workers to live lives of dignity and earn living wages in America. Farm workers from several different counties throughout the state participated. A particularly spirited group of **campesinos** from Immokalee, Florida kicked off the rally by asserting the right of farm laborers to organize for better working conditions and social equality. More than one speaker promised that if the state did not reopen the investigation, the N.C. Labor Department in Raleigh would be the next target of protest in September. **For more information on farm worker activism in North Carolina, write the Farmworkers' Project, P.O. Box 352, 301 S. Market St. Benson, NC 27504**

Workers' transformed their grievances at the Kmart distribution center into community grievances.

Kmart Surrenders!

In Greensboro, North Carolina, Kmart workers and their union, UNITE, won a contract with increased wages and benefits after a three-year struggle marked by civil disobedience, marches, arrests and a high level of community support. The great majority of the Kmart employees at the Greensboro distribution center are African-American. Many participants and observers likened the bitter labor struggle to the glory days of the civil rights movement in Greensboro, where four students from North Carolina A&T began the 1960s sit-in movement in a local Woolworth's in 1961.

Reverend Nelson Johnson, a longtime local civil rights activist observed that "Woolworth's represented the community standing up against injustice. The churches and citizens here and the workers are affected by this history and tradition, and it has meaning when you call it up again." Deborah Compton-Holt's family marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the early 1960s. As a Kmart worker three decades later, Compton-Holt joined her union sisters and brothers in a sit-in the Greensboro Kmart parking lot. Hauled off by the cops, they sang freedom songs all the way to jail.

Workers' transformed their grievances at the Kmart distribution center into community grievances. When I travelled with a friend to participate in UNITE's MLK Day rally at Greensboro, I was struck by the enormous number of yard signs in the black working-class residential section of the town that read: "For Justice in Our Community: WE DON'T SHOP AT KMART!" UNITE'S research staff discovered that Kmart was paying $5.00 an hour less than they paid workers at comparable distribution centers throughout the South. Restrooms didn't work. Worse, workers alleged that managers would follow female employees into the restrooms and harass them. In 1991, employees voted overwhelmingly to unionize, but the company refused to bargain with them. Interestingly enough, the Greensboro center was the only one in the nation that had a black-majority work force. The local NAACP and African-American ministers' associations signed on to support the struggle.

At the same time, the support of the white minority workforce at Kmart was critical. "What affects one affects the other," Dave Blum, a white 53-year-old merchandise packer told journalist Barry Yeoman. "My black union brothers make the same thing I do. We're both held down." During the MLK Day rally, hundreds of black and white workers mingled and talked to each other as if their mutual struggle had helped to partially bridge racial barriers.

I remember watching a middle-aged white Kmart worker with a grease-stained uniform walk into the auditorium at the union rally and join the rest of us in singing verses of "We Shall Overcome" and "Ain't Nobody Gonna Turn Us Around!" This man was the spitting-image of every northerner's stereotypical "red neck" and yet he was sticking his neck out further than most of us today on the slim hope that a gigantic corporation would recognize his union.

Religion played a key role in the Kmart struggle. Both African-American and white workers and their families invoked the vision of Christian social justice to argue that Kmart was an greedy and vicious employer. During one civil disobedience action, Greensboro minister William Wright told the union gathering that "You can't kill what God wants alive. If I go back to jail, it's all right. I believe it's a good day to go back to jail today."

Union workers voted to accept Kmart's last best offer: a contract that guarantees a $2.50 per hour wage increase, a better sick leave policy and

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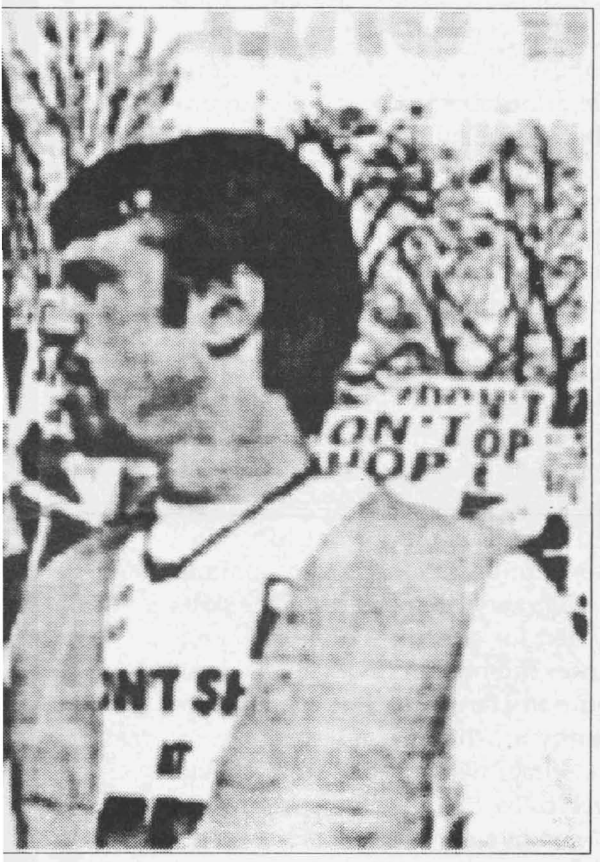
grievance procedure. Most however, were not fooled by Kmart's tactical surrender. "I know Kmart, they're sitting back laughing," noted Kmart employee Jackie Howard. "Bottom line, they played a good game of corporate politics." This is just the type of healthy skepticism that should help Kmart workers build a strong, grass-roots union. **For updates on black workers' activism, subscribe to Justice Speaks, Black Workers for Justice, P.O. Box 1339, Rocky Mount, NC 27802 ($10 for yearly subscription)**

Prime Mushroom Boycott Work

On the weekend of July 27, a team of United Farm Worker supporters visited over thirty North Carolina Food Lion supermarkets across the state asking store managers to honor the boycott of Prime Mushrooms,



called by the UFW in Quincy, Florida. Managers seemed generally receptive to the boycott committees' message. The UFW called the boycott after scores of workers were summarily fired for holding a public rally decrying the abysmal working conditions in the mushroom industry in Quincy. Food Lion has absorbed a number of publicity debacles recently, including charges of tainted meat, age discrimination, and pension fund problems. The committee, including long-time Olympia social justice activists Sheila Payne and Mike Pelly, urged Food Lion to switch brands for the duration of the boycott.

Church Bombings Spread Fear, Anger

Over thirty African-American churches have been bombed in the South this year. In North Carolina, Mt. Tabor Baptist Church in Columbus County, Pleasant Hill Baptist in Robeson County, Matthews Murkland Presbyterian in Charlotte, and Hill Chapel Missionary in Pender County have been destroyed. In May, three Durham churches received bomb threats via an anonymous racist who called the NAACP office leaving a message stating that he was "tired of you blacks."

Black congregations treat the threats seriously; however, they will not let America's home-grown terrorists defeat them. "I don't know if I was being brave or foolish," observed Margaret Wilson Smith, a Sunday school teacher at Fisher Memorial United Holy Church who refused to stop attending services. Demery Bader noted that "Our pastor suggested we come here today because when one Christian is terrorized, all Christians are terrorized."

Nor are black church members ignoring the fact that law-enforcement authorities (as well as the white-controlled media) have, until recently, treated church bombings as an aberration. During the initial resurgence of the bombings, the "experts" claimed that the fires, many of which have occurred around MLK Day, were anomalies. This escapism ignored the fact that in "post civil-rights America," virulent racist acts now start in one part of the nation and spread across the country with or without the support of the Ku Klux Klan or other organized racist groups.

Historical Roots of the Bombings

During slavery, white rulers cracked down hard on African Americans who endeavored to worship freely. Plantation owners wanted slaves to learn "servant obey thy master" religion. Enslaved African Americans however, slipped off of plantations to conduct secret revival meetings that taught a kind of liberation theology. At these remarkable revivals, American slavery was equated with "Egypt land" and slave masters were judged as modern-day Pharaohs. White military patrols conducted search-and-destroy missions to break up slave revivals, but they still endured.

After the Civil War, freedpeople founded new churches that became backbones of black culture and political organization. Again, white reactionaries targeted African-American churches because they were sites of black mutual-aid and collective hope. For example, on November 6, 1897:

> Upon the flimsy plea that a colored man handed a white lady an 'insulting and obscene' note, a mob of white men organized at Fort Pierce, Florida, burned the church building and forced all of the colored people to leave...It is a sad commentary upon the existing conditions in the South.

Thus, African Americans in the South have long endured every type of outrage and violence directed at their churches by white vigilantes. In this context, it is absurd for us to point our fingers across the ocean and scream "terrorism!" when we cannot even stop racists from tearing our own society apart. Racism dead? Please.

"Notes From the South" explores southern labor, politics, and culture from activist and historical perspectives. Information on the Kmart struggle was culled from Barry Yeoman's article "No Ways Tired," which appeared in the Independent Weekly *based in Durham. Remember: boycott grapes!*

◆

Portrait Of A Corporation

NIKE Cashing In On Human Rights Abuses

WIP News Service

Phil Knight's salary at Nike is approximately $864,583, and his bonuses for 1995 were approximately $787,500. This of course does not include his Nike stock which is worth 4.5 billion. Michael Jordan gets paid $20 million to advertise Nike shoes.

65,000 shoe workers have lost their jobs as companies move its production to the sweatshops of the Pacific Rim. Nike has led its industry in the unfortunate direction of manufacturing their products in countries where wages are low, working condition poor, and workers' attempts to deal with these issues are met with harsh repression by the local regime.

Nike's largest overseas production efforts are focused on Indonesia, where men and women (and boys and girls, some only 13 or 14 years old) make $100 pairs of basketball shoes for about $2 a day.

Nike's largest overseas production efforts are focused on Indonesia, where men and women (and boys and girls, some only 13 or 14 years old) make $100 pairs of basketball shoes for about $2 a day. Only through recent public pressure has Nike agreed to make their subcontractors (Nike's overseas production is almost exclusively managed through labor subcontractors, mostly Korean) pay the Indonesian minimum wage, a wage which an Indonesian government official admitted in a March *New York Times* article, only covers about 93% of what is required for one person's daily subsistence.

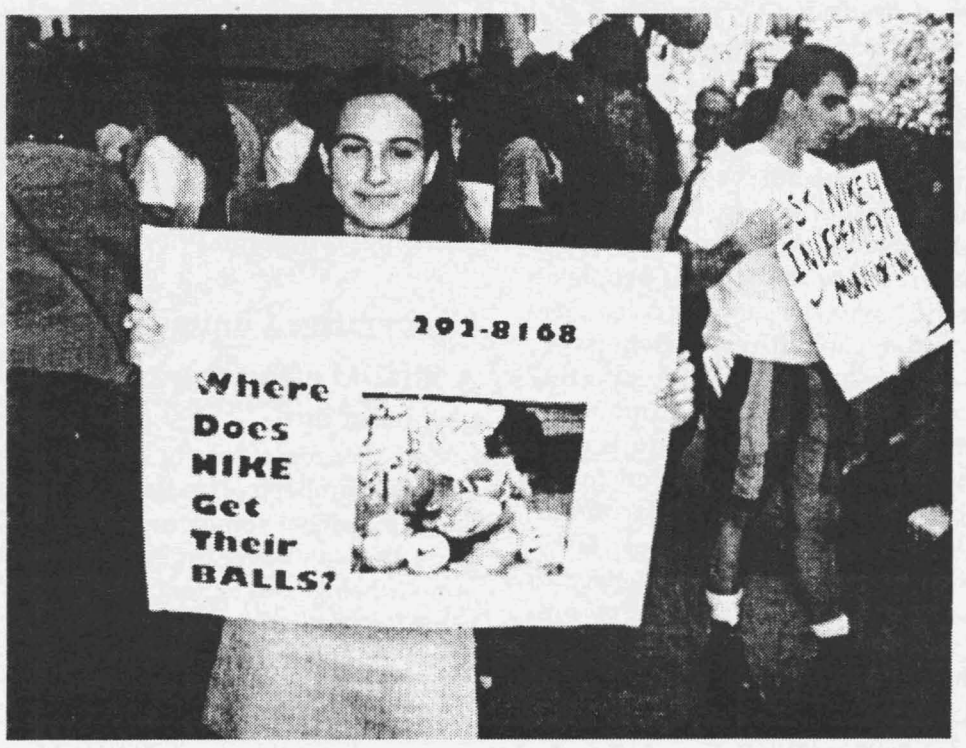
It is no accident that Nike ended up in Indonesia. Nike moved the bulk of their manufacturing operations out of South Korea in the early eighties as soon as the local government and contractors allowed workers to organize for basic rights. Such activity is not tolerated in Indonesia, a country whose government has a world-wide reputation for intolerance of dissent, including labor struggles. Nike, and others like them, have intentionally sought out these sort of regimes, taking advantage of dictatorial repression, enjoying the fruits of a labor marketplace where working people have no rights.

According to Human Rights Watch/Asia "workers lack the most basic of rights, the right to freedom of association. That right is resticted by the effective prohibition of unions...the constant interference of the military in labor negotiations and the harassment, arrest, torture, and even murder of labor organizers."

Repeatedly workers have leveled allegations of brutality against Nike subcontractors, incidents ranging from supervisors screaming at women, calling them "dogs," to individuals being slapped for poor work, to workers being beaten with shoe soles for ruining shoes. And what happens to Indonesian workers who lodge complaints or attempt to organize fellow workers against such hardships as physical and verbal abuse and forced overtime labor?

According to Apong Herlima of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation, "Employers always call the police and they come and interrogate the workers. Then the workers are fired." According to the same *New York Times* article, "An Indonesian Asset is Also a Liability," by Edward A. Gargan, a worker at Nike's plant in Serang, Indonesia was recently held in a locked room by police, in the Nike factory, while he was interrogated about his labor activities.

Information for this article came from Joseph E. Morris (jmorris@teleport.com), Frontlash (1-800-833-3250), Todd Putnam (http://seattlecafe.com/boycott/arch7.htm), and Justice: Do It Nike! Campaign (PO Box 219231 Portland, OR 97225 or maxw@rain.com). ◆



Naked Emperor Says "Westport Wobblers are My New Clothes!

by Sharon Kelly

Cooperative Commerce

Many of us know the story of the Emperor's new clothes? Hearing it as children, we probably didn't recognize it as the political satire it is. But today, revisiting "The Emperor's New Clothes" is a way to understand how the many can be pulled into service by the few and how the perceptions that forward the goals of a few can be projected onto the many.

The naked emperor marching down the streets of our town today, represents the unjobbed workers of America, those who used to be productively employed making the things we needed, used and enjoyed. One simple way we can each begin to end our own complicity in unjobbing our neighbors, is to throw our support to each other by buying from each other.

The Economy of Small

In Washington State, the migration of living wage jobs to "global trading partners" like Mexico is becoming an increasing reality. At corporate offices like Boeing, the goal is to cut operating costs. In real talk, this means closing factories and facilities in Washington state and moving factories to countries with cheap labor. An article printed in the November 13, 1995 Aberdeen Daily World, reported on the strike at a Boeing factory where insulated blankets for jetliners are made. Workers who were commended one month for worker productivity were told the next month that by 1997 all their work would be transferred down to Mexicali where labor can be bought for 76 cents an hour. In large corporate economies of scale, this practice is called "outsourcing".

Current solutions to this problem focus on education and training to prepare workers for new, high tech jobs. This sounds good, but unfortunately these new jobs don't yet exist in our economy in the numbers needed to absorb workers who have already been displaced. While time may resolve some of this abundance of workers, the need to generate income exists now; jobs envisioned for the future don't buy beans today!

In looking for ways to balance the trend of corporate "outsourcing" and restore living wage work to people in the immediate future, it is useful to re-examine the "economy of small" and to recognize that shipping goods thousands of miles to access cheap labor then shipping them back to markets has a cost too. One way to restore value to the skills people already have is by showing consumers how they can help restore living wage work to Americans by supporting small cooperatives and sole proprietorships that produce commonly consumed and used foods, goods, and services. When a community loses jobs because of cheap labor, members of the community need to look in their own closets and cupboards to see how much international shipping and low wage labor is represented. If you shop at large chains and discount houses you have very international cupboards and closets. And someone paid a lot of money to ship and market the products displayed on your hangers and shelves.

But what if foods and goods didn't have to travel so far, or be seen on TV so often to be desired? What if instead of paying for cheap labor and expensive shipping and marketing, a consumer had the choice to buy items produced locally, by workers making a living wage, at a similar price? This allows people in a community to make choices that affect the quality of life in their own community. When people have ready access to living wage work, the suffering caused by poverty and unemployment is reduced, as are the costs for social services.

Encouraging numerous small scale operations produces a diversity of product reflecting the natural resources of the area and responsive to the needs of local consumers. People would enjoy the cost savings of small, low budget, low travel, low frill operations that produce goods and services in common use in the community like simple clothing, foods, furniture, and toys, low technology products that are used regularly.

When a community loses jobs because of cheap labor, members of the community need to look in their own closets and cupboards to see how much international shipping and low wage labor is represented.

Why not develop local dairy cooperatives to bring people fresh, uncontaminated dairy foods produced by residents of the counties? Why not wear basic items of clothing sewn by people you know, who work as members of small sewing cooperatives? Why not buy jams and relishes made by creative cooks who sell their tasty wares at Farmer's Markets? Why not look for the unique, locally crafted toy or chair when you go shopping for friends and family?

This simple change in consumer behavior is one way to soften the impacts of "outsourcing" by creating work opportunities for people displaced by the changes inherent in the shift to a global economy. The Coastal Comfort Cooperative, producers of the Westport Wobbler, is one example of how this can work. At Coastal Comfort Cooperative we call this marketing and production strategy, cooperative commerce because its success depends on cooperation between the producer and the consumer.

Cooperative Commerce

A Shared effort toward a common end

Constant reminders of the huge, complex, competitive, and impersonal nature of global commerce make us forget that commerce began with one human being making something of value for another, small, simple, personal, an exchange of skills for mutual gain, cooperative commerce. That's what the Westport Wobblers are all about.

The Westport Wobbler is a soft, comfortable alternative to the bra, made by women working in their own homes - a simple, personal garment made by one women for another. Wobblers are produced by the Coastal Comfort Cooperative based in Westport Washington, whose members came together to create living wage work by making and selling basic, well made, useful products for reasonable prices. Through the cooperative, members purchase materials and develop and market their products. The emphasis of the co-op's marketing strategy is to promote the idea of cooperative commerce, letting our low costs and customer satisfaction create demand. We rely on word of mouth advertising, opportunities to tell our story, mail order, home parties, direct sales through fairs and festivals, and offering our products as fund raisers for groups. The savings in glitzy, high priced advertising are shared by the consumer who pays less and the producer who keeps more - cooperative commerce.

Cooperative commerce is a way for people to meet each others needs for affordable, quality products and living wage work, with both the consumer and the producer sharing the economic benefits. The

Westport Wobbler is but one example of this idea: members of the Coastal Comfort Cooperative offering women a soft, comfortable alternative to the bra for a fair and clearly articulated price. The Westport Wobbler ... Buy 1, Support 2.

The Westport Wobbler Project

Buy 1... Support 2

The Westport Wobbler project began with two friends talking. I was looking for a replacement for a shamefully tattered, soft, comfortable bra like garment given to me by my father's wife. My friend was looking for a way to earn a living and still be available to care for her daughter. She is a fine sewer so we tossed around ideas for creating this elusive garment. A few months later I mentioned this project while talking with a colleague about a way to create jobs for women who sew. He thought his wife, who sews, might be interested in working on the idea. She was. A short time later I learned that my son in law's mother was a prolific sewer who was interested in finding ways to earn money at home through sewing. We invited her to join our effort.

Over the next 8 months, as we designed, test marketed, and modified our prototype Wobblers we took in new sewers who brought fresh ideas and skills to our venture. In the beginning we had no name for our project and I began referring to the garments as wobblers since their function is to prevent excessive wobbling. The name stuck and we ended up calling them Westport Wobblers because the project began in Westport, WA.

Strong encouragement for the Wobbler Project came from my boss in Social Services at DSHS, Richard Englund; he helped us take a look at the potential for developing small producer cooperatives as an element of job creation for rural communities. Richard's enthusiastic support and planning assistance helped breathe life into our project at the same time he was grappling with the ravages of Lou Gehrig's disease. It was in his room in intensive care, during a burst of hilarity, that our punny slogan, Buy 1...Support 2 was first uttered.

Our slogan, Buy 1... Support 2 reflects the very essence of cooperative commerce. By buying 1 Wobbler you support both yourself with a comfortable, affordable garment and you contribute to the support of a woman and her family. The concept of cooperative commerce provides a vehicle for people: consumers, taxpayers, people needing work and income, and agencies providing services to work together to create economic vitality. Cooperative commerce expands the ways people can generate income, accommodating the diversity of skills and needs that exist in any community. And becoming part of a cooperative teaches important life skills like communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Learning the skills needed for effective cooperation enhances interactions at all levels, from home and family to the broader community in which we all live.

Contact with Co-op America and Pueblo To People taught us to see cooperative commerce as an economic alternative. Crucial support for our formation came from the Puget Sound Co-op Federation, especially Executive Director Audrey Mallon and attorney Bill Appel who provided invaluable technical assistance to us in setting up and incorporating our coop. Puget Sound Coop Federation offers opportunities for ongoing education and support to member cooperatives.

Members of the Coastal Comfort Cooperative see cooperative commerce as a way to move consumer dollars into the hands of local producers, neighbors who share the community and the world in which we live. In looking for fabric, we favor domestic textile producers like Pinecrest Fabrics in Portland, Oregon. We believe cooperative commerce is also a way to address the problem of living wage work on a world wide scale, because each new living wage work opportunity makes it that much harder to find people desperate enough to work for slave labor wages.

Our cooperative consists of six women:

- Judy lives on the Long Beach peninsula and is the single Mom of two boys.
- Tammy lives in Hoquiam; she has twin girls; Tammy and one of her girls have severe asthma; she would be unable to work in an unprotected

(Continued next page)

1996 Primary Election Endorsements

Freedom Vote and the Privacy Fund are civil rights organizations and TEAL is the Thurston Environmental Action Team

	Freedom Vote	TEAL	Privacy Fund
National Congress			
District 3	Brian Baird		
District 9	Adam Smith		
State Offices			
Governor			Gary Locke Norm Rice
Lieutenant Governor			Harvey Billmaier Frank Gavaldon
Attorney General			Christine Gregoire
Auditor			Brian Sonntag
Treasurer			Mike Murphy
Commissioner of Public Lands			Jennifer Belcher
Secretary of State			Pyllis Gutierrez Kenney Ralph Munro
Superintendent of Public Instruction	Dan Leahy		Terry Bergson
State Legislature			
20th District			
House, Position 1	Lois Lopez		
House, Position 2	no endorsement		
Senate	no endorsement		
22nd District			
House, Position 1	Sandra Romero		
House, Position 2	Cathy Wolfe		
Senate	Karen Fraser		
35th District			
House, Position 1	no endorsement Strongly oppose incumbent Representative Peggy Johnson		
House, Position 2	no endorsement		
Thurston County			
District 1	Steve Langer	Steve Langer	
District 2	no endorsement		

(Reform, continued)

easy to explain to hungry children while you wait in line at the food bank.

Slick Willie did this because he felt he had to "do something" about welfare reform before the election. If he didn't the Republicans would gleefully screech that he was yet another big-talking Democrat who reneged on the American people. (After all, hadn't they sent him two bills already?) So, in a sunny ceremony telecast live on C-SPAN and CNN, he signed misery for millions into law.

The worst part of this is, neither Slick Willie nor the Republicans are serious about welfare reform. If they were, why don't they cut Israel's $4 billion per year in "aid?" What about Egypt's $3.5 billion, Pakistan's $1 billion, Russia's $700 million? Why don't we cut the Pentagon's budget of the $20 billion it says it doesn't need but was given anyway at Clinton's insistence?

If Clinton were serious about "welfare reform," he would immediately renounce the $60,000 plus benefits he'll get -- for the rest of his life, regardless of income, even though he's already a millionaire -- every year.

In San Diego, Colin Powell became the favorite token black of the Republican Party. In Nashville, Bob Dole pledged to "earn" the black vote. In Chicago, Jesse Jackson reminded us that "four balls and you're on" is better than "three strikes, you're out." In Chicago, Christopher Reeve showed us the value of caring. And in Thurston County, a balmy summer fades away 'midst the echoes of cheers for civil rights in Sylvester Park, even as a black woman named Thelma Jackson girds herself for the race to the Washington State Legislature -- as a Republican. ◆

(Wobblers, continued)

environment and the health care needs of her daughter would make her attendance at an off site job impossible.

• Denise is the mother of eight children; she and her husband have strong family values; her presence in the home is critical to their family's well being.

• Phyliss waited a long time for her daughter, becoming a mother in her forties; she is not willing to give up the joy of being at home with her daughter but she does need to earn a living.

• Roxy is a grandmother many times over; as a young woman she knew what is was to be a single mom with the responsibility of her children; she has thrown herself into this project to make it easier for other single mothers to care for their children and generate an income.

• I am a social worker who sees daily the desperate need to create more options for living wage work for people in America. None of us knew each other before the project began.

Currently Coastal Comfort Cooperative is developing new products including variations on the Wobbler design, matching shorts, and preemie tee shirts. We are also experimenting with fabric made from hemp fibers.

For more info:
CCC 715 S. Forrest
Westport, WA 98585 ◆

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September 6 (7pm)
Intrnational Workers of the World (Wobblies) Olympia Chapter's of Uppity Workers potluck dinner - bring a dish share food and ideas

September 13 (8pm)
Liberation Benefit Concert w/Rev. Asher Dudely/raga blues Kento!/funked theremin Collective Shoe/experimental, ambiant
Free (donations)

September 20 (7pm)
Women's Liberation Movement Reform discussion locally and beyond

September 27 (7pm)
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Who is a Jew?

Is the Israeli Labor Party Socialist?

By Donald F. Busky

Mr. Busky is the State Chairperson of the Socialist Party of Pennsylvania. This article is the result of a challenge raised by Greg Bye in his article in the July issue.

People who have studied this question find it is trickier than one might first suppose. If you say that a Jew is someone who believes in the religion of Judaism, then you have the problem of secular Jews, who consider themselves Jewish even though they may not be religious at all, or even atheistic.

Karl Marx did not consider himself to be a Jew. He did not practice the religion of Judaism as far as we know. He was born into a family who had converted to Protestantism in order to advance in highly anti-Semitic Prussian society. And Marx made a number of anti-Semitic remarks both in his major writings, as well as in his private comments about Ferdinand Lassalle, the founder of the Universal German Workingmen's Association—first socialist party in Germany, whom Marx referred to as a "Jewish nigger." Yet this all did not stop Marx's anti-Semitic opponents from referring to him as a Jew. Were they right because Marx looked Jewish and had come from the ethnic group know as Jews?

If you define a Jew as someone of a particular ethnic group, you have the problem, that while 85 percent of Jews do come from the same ethnic group—Ashkenazi (from a biblical name for Germany), not all Jews belong to this ethnic group. There are Sephardic Jews that come from lands currently or formerly ruled by Muslims, including Spain and Portugal. There are also smaller numbers of Black Jews, Asian Jews, and Jews from other ethnic groups, not to mention converts.

Any Jew can emigrate to Israel, and the Law of Return of 1950, Section 4B formally defined a Jew as "a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion." But its practice, settling the question of who was and who was not a Jew, was still difficult. Not everyone knows who their mother was or what her religion might have been. And why must it be the mother who must be the Jew and not the father, to be considered Jewish? Rabbinical law, called halakhah, says so, but most we accept this definition without question?

And what about people who are religious that reject rabbinic Judaism, yet can claim some kinship to Jews-Karaites, Samaritans, and certain other groups who call themselves Jews but who also believe in Jesus as the Messiah? Are they Jewish, too? What do we mean by Judaism, anyway? There is a famous story in the Talmud about the pagan who said he would become a Jew if he could be taught the Torah while standing on one foot. The first person he told this to was one school, Shammai the Elder, who promptly threw the fellow out. But when he approached Rabbi Hillel the Elder, the leader of another school, he was told by Hillel, "What is hateful to you, do not unto your neighbor: this is the entire Torah. All the rest is commentary-go study it." The pagan, something of a taunting, practical joker, according to the story, was so awed by this answer, that he became quite serious and eventually converted to Judaism. But surely, as wise as Hillel's statement was, and it is a version of the Golden Rule, this cannot be the core of the Torah or of Judaism, for it does not even mention the idea of ethical monotheism—the central tenet of Judaism, just as historical materialism is the core Marxism.

As for conversion to Judaism, the Orthodox rabbis in Israel who have the only legal right to date to perform conversions to Judaism or marriages of Jews, refuse to recognized conversion or marriages performed by Conservative or Reform rabbis.

Paul Jonson, in his work, A History of the Jews, pointed out that most modern Jews consider anyone a Jew who considers themselves to be Jewish. I think there is wisdom in accepting this self-definition. You are a Jew if you say you are. Any other definition seems sectarian—designed to deny people of their right to call themselves Jewish.

Any Jew can emigrate to Israel, and the Law of Return of 1950, Section 4B formally defined a Jew as "a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion."

Who is a Socialist?

We shall come across very similar problems in defining just who a socialist is. Many have tried to define socialism, but unfortunately, there is little common agreement. Angelo S. Rappoport, for example, in his Dictionary of Socialism listed some thirty-nine definitions of socialism as samples of the multitude to be found in the literature, and yet, still stated that he did not know what socialism was. Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders found that histories of socialism have traditionally been saddled with the near impossible task of defining socialism. Partially this has to do with the fact that there are so many forms of socialism, whose adherents oppose each other, and in some cases violently so.

The difficulties in defining socialism also have to do with its ever changing and evolving nature. Leszek Kolakowski noted that if we tried to find a general definition of socialism we would discover that any such definition would be lacking in precision and depth. Indeed, socialism has not always meant the same thing to all people.

G.D.H. Cole remarked that while the impossibility of defining socialism had been often noted, the same could be said for other ideas such as democracy and liberty. We might also add Judaism to this list. At best, stated Cole, we could try to find some common element to all these different schools of socialism, and note the various additions to them.

R.N. Berki described all the attempts to define socialism as leading to result that were reductionist, of which he described several forms. One most important of the forms of reductionism Berki tells us is political reductionism from the approach from concrete commitment. The problem of defining socialism, despite all its complexity, is simply solved by denying the legitimacy of the label socialism to anyone who has a difference conception of what socialism is from you. You simply hold that what you believe in is "genuine" socialism, and what others who disagree with you but who call themselves socialist believe in is not really socialism at all. Marx and Engels had savagely critiqued the German or "true " socialism in The Communist Manifesto. It was a rather silly philosophical system, and no more true that any other school of socialism.

Lenin and his followers were famous for condemning their opponents inside the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. They said that the Mensheviks were not really socialists at all, only the Bolsheviks were. Further, they have repeatedly called themselves socialists, while denying that those who call themselves democratic socialists are socialists at all.

In fact, the Marxist-Leninists almost never uses the term democratic socialism. They do not like the implications, which are if those people are democratic socialists, then we must be the undemocratic socialists, and they very much do not want to admit that they are undemocratic at all, for that would obviously be a bad thing to be. Marxist-Leninists called such people, "social democrats." Somehow this sounds better to them than the reverse phrase, democratic socialist. And when they said social democracy, they meant by it a betrayal of socialism, or even something akin to fascism—something that Marxist-Leninists have often been accused of themselves. And given the millions of people who have been killed or jailed under Stalinism and Maoism, this accusation is not without reason. All those who accept this distinction between "socialism" vs. "social democracy" are buying into Marxist-Leninist terminology and logic, whether they mean to or not. I would argue this is a mistake.

If you disagree with Marxism-Leninism , or what most people call "communism," and all the totalitarianism and murderous dictatorship it has entailed, then you shouldn't be using their wordings and definitions, especially if you call yourself a democratic socialist as I do.

Take for instance Greg Bye's challenge that *Works In Progress* should solicit an article arguing that the Israeli Labor Party is socialist, in the July 1996 issue. Mr. Bye considers the Israeli Labor Party to be "pro-business, with some elements that can be considered as social democratic (not socialist)—especially for Israel's Jewish citizens. But never has evidence been presented that convinces me that the Labor Party advocates democratic control in the workplace, in commerce, in banking, in foreign policy decisions, etc."

The implication here is that the Israeli Labor Party is social democratic, but not socialist, borrowing the language of the Marxist-Leninists. This is a case in point of what Berki described as political reductionism from the approach of concrete commitment described above. It is as if to say, what Mr. Bye believes in is "true" socialism, and what the Israeli Labor Party, and presumably myself, believes in is not socialist at all, but rather something else—social democracy, which is a bad thing. Further, there is at least a hint of a definition of socialism in Mr. Bye's letter—that it must include democratic control of the workplace, in commerce, in banking, in foreign policy, etc. Of course, such a definition is insufficient, for it does not mention the idea of social ownership, which I would think is an essential element to socialism. This is similar to Rabbi Hillel defining the Torah and Judaism in terms of the Golden Rule, but not even mentioning the central idea of Judaism of one God who demands ethical behavior—ethical monotheism.

But what does "democratic control" actually mean? This too is trickier than one first might suppose. Does it mean workers' self-management, where the workers get to democratically elect their own plant managers and perhaps vote on company policies? Personally, I believe in workers' self-management, but I have to tell you that most people in the world who have called themselves socialist do not. The Bolsheviks apparently did not, for they stopped this practice in Russia soon after the revolution. Trotsky didn't believe in it, nor did Mao or Castro. I don't even think you can show that Marx or Engels specifically argued for it. The only Marxist-Leninist state that ever practiced workers self-management as far as I know was Yugoslavia under Tito.

What about the social democrats? The Fabian Socialists were against the idea on the grounds that workers' self-management wasn't democratic—for it denied a democratic say to the public and the consumer on how things were managed. Eduard Bernstein, the father of Marxist revisionism and evolutionary socialism—a social democrat it there ever was one (although he did have the sense to opposed Germany's entry in the carnage that was the First World War) was against the idea of workers' self-management on similar grounds.

It seems to me that the only socialists who supported the idea of workers' self-management were the Lassalleans (the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle and his successors), Louis Blanc and his followers who like the later Lassalleans conceived of socialism in the form of producers' coopera-

tives, the social anarchists to their credit, those in the cooperative movement, those in the Israeli Kibbutz (collective) movement, and some recent socialists. This includes the German social democrats who have enacted the Law of Co-Determination, which permits at least a minority of labor union representatives of the board of supervisors of companies, and Swedish social democrats who have managed to achieve co-management, which part of the managers are elected and some management decisions workers are allowed to vote on. We should not assume that the German and Swedish social democrats want only partial workers' control, and not the full only that this is as much as they have so far been able to persuade their societies to accept and pass in their parliaments.

The only practice of full workers' self-management that I know of today is in producers' cooperatives and in the Israeli Kibbutzim. As for democratic management in commerce and banking, we do have the examples of consumers' cooperatives and credit unions. These are forms that are quite popular with social democrats, so it would be difficult to hold that social democrats are opposed to democratic management in commerce and banking.

Democratic control in foreign policy decisions is an interesting idea, but what does it mean? Some would say that the current system in Israel is democratic—the people elect the parliament, and with the last election also the prime minister directly, and together they and the cabinet make the foreign policy. This is maybe called representative democracy, and personally, I feel it is quite limited. I would like to see not only more foreign policy, but also domestic policy decisions voted on by the people in the form of referenda and initiatives—a form of direct democracy. I believed that direct democratic socialism, as I call it, is feasible today, and will become even easier tomorrow as communications technology improves.

What Berki calls reductionism, I simply call sectarianism. It is as if to say that me and my sect are the only truly socialist ones, and all the rest of you are fakers or worse. A further example of this attitude would be when Mao called Khrushchev—a "phony communist" and a "capitalist roader," because Khrushchev had dared to criticize Mao for trying to rush headlong from the stage of socialism into the golden age of communism in the Great Leap Froward, which, had destroyed for a time Chinese agriculture and industry, and for Khrushchev's refusal to back China in a nuclear confrontation with the West.

We need to find some place to begin to understand what socialism is not, despite all these problems. Cole's approach seems to be the wisest: to find the common element in all forms of socialism, and from there go onto to explore the schools of socialism in all their variety. The implication, here, of course, is that they are all socialist because these schools self-define themselves as such. Just as there is wisdom in saying a Jew is anyone who says he or she is a Jew, a socialist is anyone who says they are a socialist. This would include Marxist-Leninists of all stripes, Marxist-DeLeonists, orthodox Marxists, revisionists, social democrats, religious socialists, and social anarchists. Why are they all socialists? Because they say they are, and because they all believe in social ownership and control, no matter if they conceive those ideas differently, and also differ on questions of government and how to achieve socialism. To say that some of these schools are not socialist, but something else (i.e. social democratic), to me smacks of political sectarianism and a rigidity of thought—something Marxist-Leninists have been accused of, and I fear all those who buy part of their argument and phraseology. I would urge Mr. Bye and others not to give in to sectarianism, and if they are not Marxist-Leninists, not to use their ideas or wording.

But Is the Israeli Labor Party Really Socialist?

The Israeli Labor Party has long considered itself socialist. It is a member of the Socialist International. It was founded by a union of parties in 1968 that called themselves socialist—Mapai (Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael—the Workers' Party of Israel—a socialist name if I've ever heard one), Rafi, and Achdut Avoda. If the Israeli Labor Party calls itself socialist, who are we to say they are not? To me this political sectarianism would be like the religious sectarianism of Orthodox Jews who sometimes deny that Conservative and especially Reform Jews are Jews at all, as well as Christian denominations accusing each of being not Christians at all, but rather heretics. There is a long and very sad history of what happens when people begin to practice religious sectarianism, for it has often led to violence. Political sectarianism is only a little else bigoted and murderous.

But we may legitimately ask to what extent has the Israeli Labor Party and its allies practices socialism? Besides long supporting the kibbutz movement they are also are connected to the Histradrut, the Israeli labor union federation, which itself is an owner of industries. Israel also has a form of socialized medicine, which Labor and its predecessors had much to do in bringing about.

It may be argued that Israel is a mostly capitalist country—that most of its enterprises are privately owned by capitalists. But is this the Labor Party's fault? One powerful wing of the Zionist movement was the labor and socialist zionists, who sought to escape the mass murder and oppression of Europe practiced against Jews, and to build a socialist society in Israel. The Soviet Union though initially of Israel in the socialist camp, for they were the first nation to formally recognize it. But the Labor Party and its predecessors have always had their Jewish political opponents—at one time called the Revisionists, and today known as the Likud Party and its allies in the Religious parties that make up the Israeli Right.

If Labor was never able to build as much of a socialist society as they wanted to, you have to understand that a very large number of people on the Right do not want that. Being democratic socialists, the Israeli Labor Party was not about to ram socialism down the throats of the people as had happened in Marxist-Leninist states, but give them only so much socialism as the people were willing support. This, is practice, has meant a mixed economy. I wish that the United States had such a mixed economy, particularly socialized medicine and a cooperative sector! With democratic socialists achievement in countries like Israel and Sweden pointing the way, I hope that one day all of humanity will achieve political democracy including more direct democracy, and a socially owned economy including both cooperatives and public ownership.

Anti-Semitism: The Socialism of Fools

It was the German social democratic leader August Bebel who termed anti-Semitism as the "socialism of fools." I would add that socialists and non-socialists who give in to anti-Semitism are all fools and bigots. Anti-Semitism is as mush a form of bigotry as racism practiced against people of color, as sexism is practiced against women, and as homophobia is practiced against gays and lesbians.

In the past, anti-Semitism was a matter of robbing and murdering Jews and discriminating against them. It went on for thousands of years, and culminated in the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism is alive today. You can see it in those who have never been willing to allow the right of Israel to exist as a sanctuary from murderous anti-Semitism in Europe and elsewhere. Indeed, these anti-Jewish forces today are desperate to prevent Israel from making peace with the PLO. That is the reason why Hezbollah chose right before the June 1996 election to launch a racket attack on Israel. They thought they could panic the Israeli people into voting Shimon Peres and the Labor Party out, and voting Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud Party and its conservative allies in on the grounds of "security." Unfortunately, they were right. They and the Israeli conservatives are the true winners of this election.

It may be too early to tell, but I fear that with Labor out of power, the peace process is dead. Netanyahu says that he will not trade land for peace, and if he holds to this position, I can see little reason why Intifada and cycle of war and reprisals will not start up again. Perhaps I am being overly pessimistic, but I do not see peace coming until the Israeli people return Labor to power and be willing to trade land for peace.

Mr. Bye wrote of an binational federation between Jews and Arabs, but I find little evidence that the Palestinian Arabs are interested in this. They want their own separate state. I cannot blame them, and if that is their national aspiration, and as long as it means the Israelis too are allowed to live in peace in their own state, then, I support that. Had the Arabs accepted the arriving Jews many years ago before the State of Israel was proclaimed, instead of trying to murder them and "drive them all into the sea," perhaps a binational state would have been possible. But I think that time has long since passed. I wish for Israel to negotiate a peace with the Arabs that would see a Palestinian state established on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Further, I would wish for israel to make peace with Syria and Lebanon in return for giving back the Golan Heights and the Israeli security zone in Southern Lebanon. I would also wish that Israel and all its neighbors build democracy and socialism into a living reality.

But what is the motivation of Hezbollah and other Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad? To establish a Palestinian state? They could have done that nay time from 1948 to 1967. They could have done it probably this year had they been willing to support the peace precess, instead of trying to wreck it. But they do not want a secular Palestinian state living in peace with Israel and its neighbors. They want the destruction of Israel, the killing and expulsion of all the Jews as happened during the Middle Ages in Europe up to the Holocaust, and the creation of a fundamentalist Islamic state. Their main motivation is religious hatred and bigotry, combined with nationalism. They neither want democracy nor socialism.

And what of those who cry loud when Israel shoots back after being rocketed from another country, but have almost nothing to say to condemn that attack in the first place? This is why I wrote my letter to WIP in the first place. Where is the balance when you condemn Israel for firing cannon and killing civilians in Lebanon, but say next to nothing to condemn the rocket attack by Hezbollah on Israel from Lebanon in the first place, with the backing of Iran and permission of Syria who controls Lebanon today? What nation would accept being rocketed and not defend itself? If the United States territory or its airplanes were attacked by rockets by a foreign power, be it a terrorist group or a state, would you deny our right to strike back with force? Everyone and every nation has the right to self-defense. And if you cannot see that, and if you persist in attacking Israel for whatever it does, and denying them their right to self-defense, while at the same time saying little at all abut the terrorist groups that attack Israel and the states behind those attacks, then I begin to wonder if not anti-Semitism is really behind your motivations?

If you say that Israel should withdraw from its security zone in Lebanon, I would agree. But they should only do so when they have a peace treaty with Lebanon and Syria to stop these attacks. You should remember why Israel came to set up that security zone in the first place—terrorist attacks on Northern Israel by the PLO which Lebanon was unable or unwilling to stop. To deny Israel the right to be free from terrorist attacks and to fight back when they are attacked, to me is a form of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is the dirty little secret behind much of the Left's hatred today for Israel. Reject it, and support the achievement of a lasting peace, democracy, and socialism. ◆

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Forest Activists Jailed & Released

Mikel Pelly

Once preserved under president Clintons Option 9 timber plan, nestled in a picturesque part of the Williamette National Forest about 50 miles east of Eugene Oregon lies Warner Creek. It is the natural home of diverse wildlife and vegetation swiftly regrowing from the scares of an arson fire five years ago. Since passage last year of the Timber Salvage Rider a small village of environmental activists and supporters has flourished at Warner Creek. This vibrant community known as Cascadia Free State, has grown over the past year, housing and feeding (two group wide meals daily) literally thousands of visitors. Some with a devotion to saving old trees, so strong there was a willingness to get arrested and possible incur bodily harm if it would help stop the logging.

Having made several visits to Warner Creek this past year I was always impressed with the level of cooperation and a willing devotion to conscientiously coexist as a community. A shared focus to save the trees was apparent in residents manners regarding daily interactions. People were really working together for a greater good and that was what was most important. Big egos, attitudes, and disrespect for each other did not very often rear up around the village. Getting along was a must.

This learned cohesiveness and peaceful living became necessary when the U.S. Forest Service on orders from Washington D.C. sent in a crack team to raid the village, shortly before dawn on Aug.16th. The raid involved the arrests of seven people including a photographer and journalist from the Eugene Register-Guard. The newspaper people had a camera and note pad illegally seized from them. These items have since been returned to them with the camera's film developed. The journalists charged with trespassing, were arrested about 30 yards from where the activists locked to the road, creating a road block. This was one of several similar raids on road blocks, in National forests in the northwest over a three week period. These resourcefully built road blocks are the only recourse left for forest activists to reform the logging with out laws policy our government is presently exercising with the Salvage Rider.

Three days later about 250 protestors assembled out side the Federal Building in Eugene to draw attention to the Salvage Rider and how the Forest Service mishandles our national forests. The forest service has said that it canceled the sale and withdrew another proposal to log 13 million additional board feet under the rider. The activists do not believe what their being told because the Forest Service won't produce any papers to bolster these contentions. After assembling at the federal building for an hour and half of speakers, singing and skits the group took to the street and paraded over to the Lane County Jail. The reason for moving to the jail was to attend the arraignment of four woman, arrested in the raid three days prior. Three days in jail for blocking a road was long. It was time they be released.

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The situation at the jail became quite intense once 75 people had entered its lobby demanding to attend the arraignment. Deputies denied their request citing crowding concerns. A few people rushed past a metal detector causing deputies to then start arresting people who refused to leave the building. The situation in the lobby then turned very ugly when an unidentified protestor, drumming on a window, accidently caused it to break. And at that point deputies locked the exit doors trapping then inside. All hell broke out with screams and tension filled chaos when Sheriff deputies started using Tasers (stun guns) on people including a minor. Thirty Nine people were arrested in the jails lobby. Outside on the side walk and courtyard there were about one hundred and twenty more protestors peacefully milling around and holding banners seeking the release of the four Warner Creek supporters still being detained inside. Shortly after the jails lobby mayhem the group outside was surrounded by Thirty Eugene Police in full riot gear along with thirty more Sheriff Deputies. The police told the people out side to move away and started to physically push a couple of people. Citing the first amendments right to freedom of assembly, none of the people gathered outside were willing to budge till the four women inside were released. In a move never personally seen before, and to the credit of the Eugene Police, a conflict resolution team was picked out by both sides. Two police officers and two activists walked into the parking lot away from the tensions to work out a solution. An hour later the four Warner Creek protestors were released out of the jailhouse doors closest to their supporters. This created more creditability towards the Eugene Police Dept. among some protestors, heightened tensions relaxed some.

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September 6th would be the one year anniversary of the Warner Creek village. So as a memory to all the good times, bonding and growing that the village did for its protestors, visitors, and also in the event that Warner Creek be destroyed. There will be held for Warner Creek a New Orleans style funeral, Sept. 6th. Any one interested in attending from the Olympia area should call 786-1549 or 866-4268.

A bit of an update. The logging corporation that has the contract to log Warner Creek is in deep dodo with the Justice department over logging violations. There has been negotiations between the forest service and the contractor to substitute Warner Creek for other sale. The most recent negotiations were to switch it for first dibs on six other sales and some money. Sounds like a sweet deal to me, for someone in trouble with past violations. ◆

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Warner Creek

Last week I had the opportunity to again visit Oregon's newest village. Cascadia Free State. In an area of the Williamette National Forest it is about 40 miles east of Eugene and a couple of miles up into the mountains outside of Oakridge. Cascadia Free State was settled last summer by a dedicated group of individuals who cherish the beauty that a natural forest can provide. The rallying cry that has brought this group of people together and created this community is the necessity to defend this small part of America from the barbarians who seek to destroy it and render it lifeless. This band of barbarians whose vision is so blurred with greed that every thing has a price tag attached to it no matter how sacred it may be to others is better known as the 104th Congress and its cronies in the Senate and logging companies. It is for this reason that to enter one first encounters a wall, in that wall is a draw bridge it lowers down over a moat and forms a bridge.

Thanks to the residents of villages like Cascadia Free State and the mysterious burrowing creatures like cascadia road peckers a legendary nocturnal creature known to work only in complete darkness and without a sound, this area remains still tranquil, alive and beautiful.

My visit to this area known also as Warner Creek was a most pleasant experience. This was the first time I've been back in the area since October 95. I found this visit very pleasing seeing all the infrastructure improvements residents have accomplished. There were two community kitchens at different points along the road. Volunteers prepared both morning and evening meals that were quite filling and tasty. This is pretty good considering that while there I was one of about forty or fifty people.

Last summer the 104th Congress and later President Clinton signed into law the Salvage Rider. This rider that has drawn a lot of criticism the past year was written up by lobbyist of Senator Slade Gorton as a way to side track all of the endangered species acts and any other law that protected old growth forrest habitats. The Warner Creek area was set aside under President Clintons Option 9 as a protected ecosystem. With the salvage rider all those protections are now down the drain and the only thing that's saving Warner Creek is its dedicated band of forrest defenders who are ready to be arrested in massive numbers if needed till the 104th congress and its destructive laws are voted out. In the mean time I encourage every one to take a trip down to Cascadia Free State and see what true Democracy is really all about.

To get there one would head south of eugene on highway 5, to 58 east. After passing through Oakridge you take a left on fish hatchery and follow it to the end. From there you take a right onto hwy 24. Go about 5 miles and take the first right after the campground. This right leads you over a bridge and onto route 2408. Take 2408 about 3-5 miles till it ends at Cascadia Free State. You'll have to take the left fork and then later on up the road to the right.

In The Palm Of My Hand

Holly Ann Aquino

I'd been having dreams about spiders. Three to be exact. In the first one I was making a bed that I knew I wanted to sleep in, and I kept finding these enormous dried up corpses. In my waking life I would have probably left the room in a blur, but in the dream, I actually picked the dead spiders up and nonchalantly discarded them. Then when I was sure the bed was clear of spiders, I laid down to rest.

In the second dream I was preparing a room and once again discarding dead spiders, clearing away their web with my bare hand; again once I was sure the room I was preparing was clear I laid down on the bed which was in the room and rested.

The third dream was different from the first two in that I was already lying in bed when the dream began; also in this third dream not all of the spiders which were surrounding my bed were dead. I remember in this dream feeling only mildly distressed at knowing that there were living spiders so close to me. In this third dream there was a woman standing over me. She gently, but incessantly gave an account of what each of the spiders looked like. She placed her hand upon my chest and assured me that I shouldn't feel frightened. They were, in their own way, beautiful, to be looked upon more as a guardian rather than an antagonist.

After this dream I decided to find out why this symbol kept recurring in my dream. I had never had a recurrent dream before, and for some reason this seemed to lend even more power to the word "spider" for me.

I began by looking into different myths and folklore dealing with spiders. I found that some pre-Christian religions looked upon spiders as being symbolic of birth and creation. They saw the spider weaving its web from silk coming from its own body as being tantamount to the world emerging from the body of the great Goddess. I learned there was once a time when a spider and its web was looked upon as a symbol of the womb of the goddess and her creation.

Learning about this awakened my mind. Made it thirst for more knowledge of the Goddess. The concept of seeing the earth as a mother seemed to be a much more viable than a father sitting on an intangible throne watching over me. As my force-fed ideology of a patriarchal oppressive deity began to weaken and fall away from my psyche, I began to recognize parts of the Goddess within myself. My womb, capable of creation. The water in my body moving in sync with the ocean and the moon.

Things that before I had begun this journey were things I could only look at feeling ignorantly detached from. Feeling as though these things were too fathomless for me to claim to be party to. I began to dream of the Goddess. Of the ocean and its symbiotic lover, the moon. I began to see the moon, the womb of the Goddess and the body of the spider as one. I saw the legs of the spider spread out in the shape of the swastika, a symbol of the four winds, a symbol encompassing eternity.

After this dream I decided to find out why this symbol kept recurring in my dream. I had never had a recurrent dream before, and for some reason this seemed to lend even more power to the word "spider" for me.

It was soon after my dreams had reached this visionary level that I woke one morning to find twenty or thirty spiders resting in a row on my headboard. At first I thought I was still dreaming. Groggily, I blinked at them. Countless eyes blinked back at me. I could feel them waiting. But what for? Why? Why in Goddess's name were thirty spiders sitting on my headboard looking at me? I wondered where my fear of spiders had gone, for I had no urge to run and find a shoe.

Stranger still was my urge to touch them, and before I realized that it was indeed me who was doing it, I reached my hand out to them in an almost beckoning gesture. As if on command, the spiders all crawled onto my hand. I felt the indescribable tickle of 240 little legs lithely scurrying across my skin of my hand and every hair on my body raised in protest. Still, I did not move to try to rid myself of them. Not one of them bit me and they stayed within the confines if my open palm. I eventually stopped asking myself why, and became entranced by the shifting, pulsating little mass of creatures in my outstretched hand.

Sitting there quietly in my bedroom, I could hear the faintest whispersoft clickings and crackling sounds their bodies made rubbing and bumping against one another as they began to weave a web the length and width of the palm of my hand. They were all working together, busily crawling, passing over and over one another creating layer upon layer of silk.

Some time passed (I don't know how much) and I could see that they were finishing, as they were all beginning to expire. They just seemed to get to a certain point, curl their legs beneath them and die. All except one. It was by far the largest of all of the spiders and I watched in dumb fascination as this largest spider began to busily go to each of the spiders that had died and drink their blood. the one word which rang loudest in my mind was "compassion".

When the spider finished, instead of dying like the others, it placed itself in the center of the web that had been built on my palm and looked up at me. We looked at one another for what seemed like a long time them the answer came to me as a reassuring whisper. I slowly closed my fingers around the spider and its creation. I increased the pressure of my closing palm until my arm shook from the effort and my body trembled from the scream which was now coming from my mouth.

In an instant the life forces of all of the spiders surged through me. My skin burned with thousands of lives of thousands of spiders frantically crawling, weaving, creating. In an instant I became a spider, my silk-laden womb compulsively joyously giving birth to infinite worlds. In an instant I became the Goddess and fathomed infinity. Then it was all over.

I inhaled tentatively and looked down at my still shaking closed hand. It felt sticky and moist like a residue of something that was no more. Slowly I climbed out of my bed holding my hand in front of me. I went to my jewelry box and with my free hand reached inside and pulled out a locket the shape of a sphere. I popped it open and reverently placed the web and its inhabitants in the locket, closed it and slowly slid the chain over my head. The sphere rested in the center of my sternum covering my heart. It felt warm there.

I haven't taken it off since. ◆

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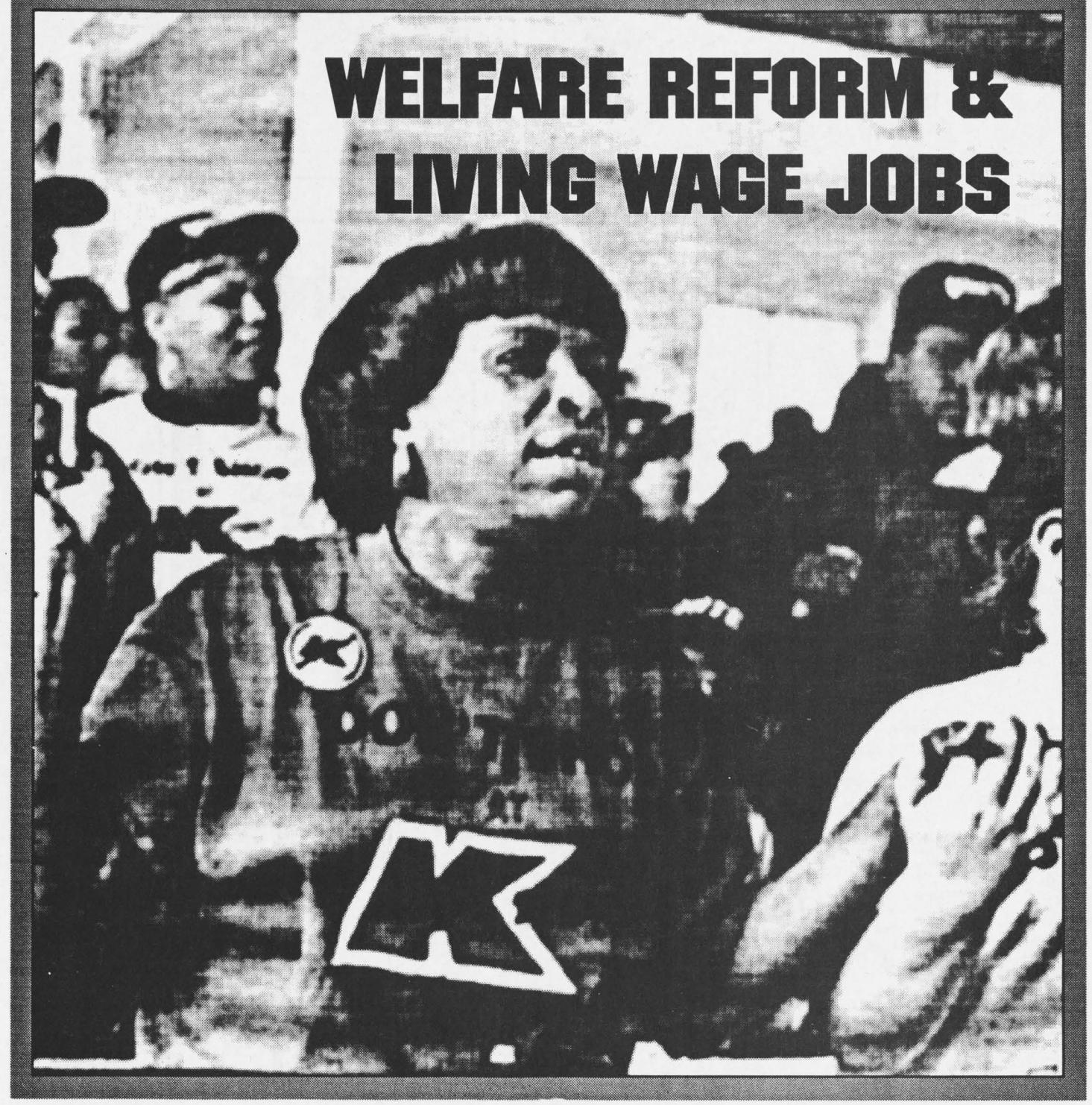
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